

La bohème

Giacomo Puccini

Minnesota
OPERA

OPERA BOX

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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La bohème

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Kevin Ramach, PRESIDENT AND GENERAL DIRECTOR

Dale Johnson, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Educator,

Thank you for using a Minnesota Opera Opera Box. This collection of material has been designed to help any educator to teach students about the beauty of opera. This collection of material includes audio and video recordings, scores, reference books and a Teacher's Guide.

The Teacher's Guide includes Lesson Plans that have been designed around the materials found in the box and other easily obtained items. In addition, Lesson Plans have been aligned with State and National Standards. See the Unit Overview for a detailed explanation.

Before returning the box, please fill out the Evaluation Form at the end of the Teacher's Guide. As this project is new, your feedback is imperative. Comments and ideas from you – the educators who actually use it – will help shape the content for future boxes. In addition, you are encouraged to include any original lesson plans. The Teacher's Guide is intended to be a living reference book that will provide inspiration for other teachers. If you feel comfortable, include a name and number for future contact from teachers who might have questions regarding your lessons and to give credit for your original ideas. You may leave lesson plans in the Opera Box or mail them in separately.

Before returning, please double check that everything has been assembled. The deposit money will be held until I personally check that everything has been returned (i.e. CDs having been put back in the cases). Payment may be made to the Minnesota Opera Education Department. All forms of payment are accepted.

Since opera is first and foremost a theatrical experience, it is strongly encouraged that attendance at a performance of an opera be included. The Minnesota Opera offers Student Matinees and discounted group rate tickets to regular performances. It is hoped that the Opera Box will be the first step into exploring opera, and attending will be the next.

I hope you enjoy these materials and find them helpful. If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to call or e-mail me any time.

Sincerely,



Jamie Andrews
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LESSON PLAN TITLE PAGE WITH RELATED ACADEMIC STANDARDS

LESSON TITLE	MINNESOTA ACADEMIC STANDARDS: ARTS K-12	NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION
1 – Are you a bohemian?	Music 9.1.1.3.1 Music 9.1.1.3.3 Theater 9.1.1.4.1 Theater 9.1.1.4.2 Visual Arts 9.1.1.5.1 Visual Arts 9.1.1.5.2 Music 9.1.3.3.1 Music 9.1.3.3.2 Theater 9.1.3.4.1 Theater 9.1.3.4.2 Visual Arts 9.1.3.5.1 Visual Arts 9.1.3.5.2 Music 9.4.1.3.1 Music 9.4.1.3.2 Theater 9.4.1.4.1 Theater 9.4.1.4.2 Visual Arts 9.4.1.5.1 Visual Arts 9.4.1.5.2	8, 9
2 – Understanding the libretto	Music 9.1.3.3.1 Music 9.1.3.3.2	6, 7, 8, 9
3 – Puccini, the master of opera	Music 9.1.3.3.1 Music 9.1.3.3.2 Theater 9.1.3.4.1 Theater 9.1.3.4.2	8, 9
4 – Acting scenes from <i>La bohème</i>	Theater 9.1.1.4.1 Theater 9.1.1.4.2 Music 9.4.1.3.1 Music 9.4.1.3.2 Theater 9.4.1.4.1 Theater 9.4.1.4.2	8, 9

5 – Translating <i>La bohème</i> into other genres	Music 9.1.1.3.1 Music 9.1.1.3.2 Music 9.1.1.3.3 Theater 9.1.1.4.1 Theater 9.1.1.4.2 Theater 9.1.1.4.3 Music 9.1.2.3.1 Music 9.1.2.3.2 Music 9.1.2.3.3 Theater 9.1.2.4.1 Theater 9.1.2.4.2 Music 9.1.3.3.1 Music 9.1.3.3.2 Theater 9.1.3.4.1 Theater 9.1.3.4.2 Music 9.2.1.3.1 Music 9.2.1.3.2 Music 9.2.1.3.3 Theater 9.2.1.4.1 Theater 9.2.1.4.2 Theater 9.2.1.4.3 Music 9.4.1.3.1 Music 9.4.1.3.2 Theater 9.4.1.4.1 Theater 9.4.1.4.2	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
6 – Miming <i>La bohème</i>	Theater 9.1.1.4.1 Theater 9.1.1.4.2 Theater 9.1.1.4.3 Theater 9.1.3.4.1 Theater 9.1.3.4.2 Theater 9.2.1.4.1 Theater 9.2.1.4.2	8, 9
7 – Motives in <i>La bohème</i>	Music 9.1.1.3.1 Music 9.1.1.3.2 Music 9.1.2.3.1 Music 9.1.2.3.2 Music 9.1.2.3.3 Music 9.1.3.3.1 Music 9.1.3.3.2 Music 9.4.1.3.1 Music 9.4.1.3.2	6, 7, 8, 9
8 – That was a great performance and I know why!	Music 9.4.1.3.1 Music 9.4.1.3.2 Theater 9.4.1.4.1 Theater 9.4.1.4.2	8, 9
9 – Musical characteristics of <i>La bohème</i>	Music 9.1.1.3.1 Music 9.1.1.3.2 Music 9.1.3.3.1 Music 9.1.3.3.2 Music 9.4.1.3.1 Music 9.4.1.3.2	6, 7, 8, 9

OPERA BOX LESSON PLANS WITH RELATED STANDARDS

The lessons in this Teacher Guide are aligned with the current Minnesota Academic Standards, Arts K–12, and the National Standards for Music Education. It is not the intention of these lessons to completely satisfy the standards. This list only suggests how the standards and lesson objectives relate to each other.

MINNESOTA ACADEMIC STANDARDS, ARTS K–12

The Minnesota Academic Standards in the Arts set the expectations for achievement in the arts for K–12 students in Minnesota. The standards are organized by grade band (K–3, 4–5, 6–8, 9–12) into four strands that foster the development of students' artistic literacy.

The strands are as follows:

1. Artistic Foundations
2. Artistic Process: Create or Make
3. Artistic Process: Perform or Present, and
4. Artistic Process: Respond or Critique.

Each strand has one or more standards that can be implemented in the arts areas of dance, media arts, music, theater and/or visual arts. The benchmarks for the standards in each arts area are designated by a five-digit code. In reading the coding, please note that for code 0.3.1.5.2, the 0 refers to the K–3 (K–3) grade band, the 3 refers to the Artistic Process: Perform or Present strand, the 1 refers to the first (and only) standard for that strand, the 5 refers to the fifth arts area (visual arts), and the 2 refers to the second benchmark for that standard.

See the Minnesota Department of Education website for more information: education.state.mn.us/mde

Grades 9–12

STRAND: Artistic Foundations

STANDARD 1: Demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of the arts area.

ARTS AREA: Music

CODE: 9.1.1.3.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the elements of music including melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, tone color, texture, form and their related concepts are combined to communicate meaning in the creation of, performance of, or response to music.

9.1.1.3.2

BENCHMARK: Evaluate how the elements of music and related concepts such as repetition, pattern, balance and emphasis are used in the creation of, performance of, or response to music.

9.1.1.3.3

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the characteristics of a variety of genres and styles contribute to the creation of, performance of, or response to music.

ARTS AREA: Theater

CODE: 9.1.1.4.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the elements of theater, including plot, theme, character, language, sound and spectacle are combined to communicate meaning in the creation of, performance of, or response to theater.

9.1.1.4.2

BENCHMARK: Evaluate how forms such as musical theater, opera or melodrama, and structures such as chronological or nonlinear are used in the creation of, performance of, or response to theater.

9.1.1.4.3

BENCHMARK: Evaluate how the characteristics of Western and non-Western styles, such as Kabuki, Noh, Theater of the Absurd or classical contribute to the creation of, performance of, or response to theater.

ARTS AREA: Visual Arts

CODE: 9.1.1.5.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the elements of visual arts such as repetition, pattern, emphasis, contrast and balance are used in the creation of, presentation of, or response to visual artworks.

9.1.1.5.2

BENCHMARK: Evaluate how the principles of visual art such as repetition, pattern, emphasis, contrast and balance are used in the creation of, presentation of, or response to visual artworks.

STANDARD 2: Demonstrate knowledge of and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable.

ARTS AREA: Music

CODE: 9.1.2.3.1

BENCHMARK: Read and notate music using standard notation system such as complex meters, extended ranges and expressive symbols, with and without the use of notation software in a variety of styles and contexts.

9.1.2.3.2

BENCHMARK: Sing alone and in small and large groups (multi-part), or play an instrument alone in and in small or large groups, a variety of music using characteristic tone, technique and expression.

9.1.2.3.3

BENCHMARK: Use electronic musical tools to record, mix, play back, accompany, arrange or compose music.

ARTS AREA: Theater

CODE: 9.1.2.4.1

BENCHMARK: Act by developing, communicating and sustaining character; or design by conceptualizing and realizing artistic interpretations; or direct by interpretations dramatic text and organizing and rehearsing for informal or formal productions.

9.1.2.5.1

BENCHMARK: Use technology for purposes of research, feedback, documentation or production.

ARTS AREA: Visual Arts

CODE: 9.1.2.5.1

BENCHMARK: Integrate the characteristics of the tools, materials and techniques of a selected media in original artworks to support artistic purposes

STANDARD 3: Demonstrate understanding of the personal, social, cultural and historical contexts that influence the arts areas.

ARTS AREA: Music

CODE: 9.1.3.3.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the personal, social, cultural and historical contexts influence the creation, interpretation or performance of music including the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities.

9.1.3.3.2

BENCHMARK: Synthesize and express an individual view of the meanings and functions of music.

ARTS AREA: Theater

CODE: 9.1.3.4.2

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the personal, social, cultural and historical contexts influence the creation, interpretation or performance of music including the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities.

9.1.1.4.2

BENCHMARK: Synthesize and express an individual view of the meanings and functions of theater.

ARTS AREA: Visual Arts

CODE: 9.1.3.5.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the personal, social, cultural and historical contexts influence the creation, interpretation or performance of music including the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities.

9.1.3.5.2

BENCHMARK: Synthesize and express an individual view of the meanings and functions of visual arts.

STRAND 2: Artistic Process: Create or Make

STANDARD 1: Create or make in a variety of contexts in the arts areas using the artistic foundations.

ARTS AREA: Music

CODE: 9.2.1.3.1

BENCHMARK: Improvise, compose or arrange new musical compositions in a variety of styles and contexts using available technology to preserve the creations.

9.2.1.3.2

BENCHMARK: Revise a musical composition or arrangement based on artistic intent and using multiple sources of critique and feedback.

9.2.1.3.3

BENCHMARK: Justify an artistic statement, including how audience and occasion influence creative choices.

ARTS AREA: Theater

CODE: 9.2.1.4.1

BENCHMARK: Create a single, complex work or multiple works in theater such as a script, character or design.

9.2.1.4.2

BENCHMARK: Revise a creation based on artistic intent and using multiple sources of critique and feedback.

9.2.1.4.3

BENCHMARK: Justify an artistic statement, including how audience and occasion influence creative choices.

STRAND 4: Artistic Process: Respond or Critique

STANDARD 1: Respond to or critique a variety of creations and performances using the artistic foundations.

ARTS AREA: Music

CODE: 9.4.1.3.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze, interpret and evaluate a variety of musical works of performances by applying self-selected criteria within the traditions of the art form.

9.4.1.3.2

BENCHMARK: Justify choices of self-selected criteria based on knowledge of how criteria affect criticism.

ARTS AREA: Theater

ARTS AREA: Theater

9.4.1.4.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze, interpret and evaluate a variety of works in theater by applying self-selected criteria within the traditions of the art form.

9.4.1.4.2

BENCHMARK: Justify choices of self-selected criteria based on knowledge of how criteria affect criticism.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

- 1 Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
- 2 Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
- 3 Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
- 4 Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
- 5 Reading and notating music.
- 6 Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
 - A analyze aural examples of a varied repertoire of music, representing diverse genres and cultures, by describing the uses of elements of music and expressive devices
 - B demonstrate extensive knowledge of the technical vocabulary of music
 - C identify and explain compositional devices and techniques used to provide unity, variety, tension and release in a musical work and give examples of other works that make similar uses of these devices and techniques
 - D demonstrate the ability to perceive and remember music events by describing in detail significant events occurring in a given aural example
 - E compare ways in which musical materials are used in a given example relative to ways in which they are used in other works of the same genre or style
 - F analyze and describe uses of the elements of music in a given work that make it unique, interesting, and expressive
- 7 Evaluating music and music performances.
 - A evolve specific criteria for making informed, critical evaluations of the quality and the effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements, and improvisations and apply the criteria in their personal participation in music
 - B evaluate a performance, composition, arrangement, or improvisation by comparing it to similar or exemplary models
 - C evaluate a given musical work in terms of its aesthetic qualities and explain it to similar or exemplary models
- 8 Understanding relationships between music, the others arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
 - A explain how elements, artistic processes, and organizational principles are used in similar and distinctive ways in the various arts and cite examples
 - B compare characteristics of two or more arts within a particular historical period or style and cite examples from various cultures
 - C explain ways in which the principles and subject matter of various disciplines outside the arts are interrelated with those of music
 - D compare the uses of characteristic elements, artistic processes, and organizational principles among the arts in different historical periods and different cultures
 - E explain how the roles of creators, performers, and others involved in the production and presentation of the arts are similar to and different from one another in the various arts
- 9 Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

OPERA BOX CONTENT LIST

La bohème

There is one (1) of each of the following items:

- _____ *La bohème* LIBRETTO (G. Schirmer)
- _____ *La bohème* FULL SCORE (Dover)
- _____ *La bohème* VOCAL SCORE (G. Schirmer)
- _____ DVD *La bohème* (Australian Opera/Baz Luhrmann)
- _____ DVD *La bohème* (Metropolitan Opera/Levine, Carreras)
- _____ CD *La bohème* (Pavarotti, Freni, von Karajan) (London)
- _____ CD *La bohème* (Tebaldi, Bergonzi, Serafin) (Decca)
- _____ BOOK *The Complete Operas of Puccini* (Charles Osborne)
- _____ BOOK *Puccini and His Operas* (Stanley Sadie)
- _____ BOOK *La bohème* (Metropolitan Opera Classics Library)
- _____ BOOK *Opera, Composers, Works, Performers* (András Batta)
- _____ Teacher's Guide

The entire deposit will be withheld until all items are returned. Any damaged items will be charged to renter for the amount of replacement. Thank you for using the Minnesota Opera's Opera Box and teaching opera in your school!

REFERENCE/TRACKING GUIDE

La bohème

This is a chart that coordinates each track or chapter number for the CDs and DVDs in the Opera Box. If you are doing a lesson where you are comparing differing interpretations, this chart shows you where each excerpt is, its relationship to the other recordings and the related pages of the scores.

FULL SCORE	VOCAL SCORE	DECCA CD	LONDON CD	LUHRMANN DVD	MET DVD
PAGE 1	PAGE 4	CD/TRACK 1/1	CD/TRACK 1/1	TRACK 2	TRACK 2
PAGE 27	PAGE 18	TRACK 1/2	TRACK 1/2	TRACK 3	
PAGE 33	PAGE 21				TRACK 3
PAGE 34	PAGE 22	TRACK 1/3	TRACK 1/3	TRACK 4	
PAGE 52	PAGE 34	TRACK 1/4	TRACK 1/4	TRACK 5	TRACK 4
PAGE 74	PAGE 50				TRACK 5
PAGE 77	PAGE 52	TRACK 1/5	TRACK 1/5	TRACK 6	
PAGE 79	PAGE 55				TRACK 6
PAGE 80	PAGE 56	TRACK 1/6	TRACK 1/6	TRACK 7	
PAGE 82	PAGE 58	TRACK 1/7	TRACK 1/7	TRACK 8	
PAGE 89	PAGE 64	TRACK 1/8	TRACK 1/8	TRACK 9	TRACK 7
PAGE 98	PAGE 70	TRACK 1/9	TRACK 1/9	TRACK 10	TRACK 8
PAGE 110	PAGE 79	TRACK 1/10	TRACK 1/10	TRACK 11	TRACK 9
PAGE 121	PAGE 87	TRACK 1/11	TRACK 1/11	TRACK 12	TRACK 10
PAGE 147	PAGE 105	TRACK 1/12	TRACK 1/12	TRACK 13	
PAGE 152	PAGE 109				TRACK 11
PAGE 164	PAGE 116	TRACK 1/13	TRACK 1/13	TRACK 14	TRACK 12
PAGE 176	PAGE 122				TRACK 13
PAGE 177	PAGE 123	TRACK 1/14	TRACK 1/14	TRACK 15	
PAGE 194	PAGE 139	TRACK 1/15	TRACK 1/15	TRACK 16	TRACK 14
PAGE 219	PAGE 155	TRACK 1/16	TRACK 1/16	TRACK 17	

FULL SCORE	VOCAL SCORE	DECCA CD	LONDON CD	LUHRMANN DVD	MET DVD
PAGE 239	PAGE 179	CD/TRACK 2/1	CD/TRACK 2/1	TRACK 18	TRACK 15
PAGE 250	PAGE 187	TRACK 2/2	TRACK 2/2	TRACK 19	
PAGE 255	PAGE 189	TRACK 2/3	TRACK 2/3	TRACK 20	TRACK 16
PAGE 271	PAGE 199	TRACK 2/4	TRACK 2/4	TRACK 21	TRACK 17
PAGE 277	PAGE 203	TRACK 2/5	TRACK 2/5	TRACK 22	
PAGE 282	PAGE 206	TRACK 2/6	TRACK 2/6	TRACK 23	TRACK 18
PAGE 294	PAGE 213	TRACK 2/7	TRACK 2/7	TRACK 24	TRACK 19
PAGE 299	PAGE 216	TRACK 2/8	TRACK 2/8	TRACK 25	TRACK 20
PAGE 319	PAGE 231	TRACK 2/9	TRACK 2/9	TRACK 26	TRACK 21
PAGE 326	PAGE 236	TRACK 2/10	TRACK 2/10	TRACK 27	
PAGE 335	PAGE 240				TRACK 22
PAGE 352	PAGE 249		TRACK 2/11	TRACK 28	
PAGE 353	PAGE 250	TRACK 2/11			TRACK 23
PAGE 365	PAGE 255	TRACK 2/12	TRACK 2/12	TRACK 29	TRACK 24
PAGE 381	PAGE 266	TRACK 2/13	TRACK 2/13	TRACK 30	TRACK 25
PAGE 386	PAGE 269	TRACK 2/14	TRACK 2/14	TRACK 31	TRACK 26
PAGE 398	PAGE 276	TRACK 2/15	TRACK 2/15	TRACK 32	
PAGE 399	PAGE 277				TRACK 27

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 1: Are you a Bohemian?

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will learn about Paris and the Bohemians during the middle of the 19th century, the time that *La bohème* takes place.

MATERIAL(S)

- Reference book about Puccini
- General reference books about Paris and the Bohemians (*not in Opera Box*)
- “Is the Bohemian lifestyle still around today?” Interview Guide

PROCEDURE(S)

- (1) Divide class into small groups and assign specific topics related to the life and times of Paris circa 1845. Each group is to find information on various aspects of culture on that time period. Depending on number of groups, topics could also include cultures of other countries at that time.

Suggested research topics:

- Social and cultural life in Paris
 - Political life and social classes
 - Artistic life (authors, poets, painters, etc.) in Paris and in Europe
 - The artistic aesthetic during the middle of the 19th century
 - The role and perception of women in European society
- (2) As a class, discuss the findings of the students. Look for similarities between the topics that demonstrate the importance of artistic beliefs. Themes such as how material wealth like money, food and shelter, is held as inferior to the virtue of the artist suffering for his or her art. Discuss where the political and financial power was. Ask the class if they think these artists who were holding these beliefs were rich or poor.
- (3) From this class discussion, students are to create a list of characteristics about persons and society from this time. Do the students see any reoccurring traits and habits? Is the Bohemian lifestyle still alive today? Do they see any of these traits in today's culture?
- (4) Assign students to interview someone who is at least 15 years older than themselves. They are to ask the interviewee about the bohemian lifestyle in today's society. See “Is the Bohemian lifestyle still around today?” Interview Guide on following page.
- (5) Following the interviews, have the students debate where or not the Bohemian lifestyle is alive today or a thing of the past. Divide the class into two groups, each taking one side of the argument. Each student will be responsible for taking some role in supporting the argument. Encourage students to use all their research, media and other items to enhance their arguments.

Suggested debate topic points:

- Salaries and fame of “pop” artists versus serious or classically trained artists
- Are the ideals of the Bohemian lifestyle still held currently?
- Do artists today suffer like they did in Paris circa 1845?

ASSESSMENT(S)

Value will be assigned to class participation, quality of research, and quality of responses from interview. Each student is to participate in supporting the argument. Each side must submit an outline of their arguments prior to the debate.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

Is the Bohemian lifestyle still around today?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

NAME _____

DIRECTIONS

Find a person who is at least 15 years older than yourself to interview. Record their answers. Be sure to record what was truly said instead of what you thought was said. Make sure the person you are interviewing knows what the “Bohemian lifestyle” is.

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE _____

RELATIONSHIP TO INTERVIEWEE _____

Were you a Bohemian?

- What was the most important part of life your when you were 17–27?
- What type of housing did you live in?
- What were your dreams of the future?
- What was your outlook toward rich people?
- During this time in your life, if you felt that you had a very powerful work of art to create, would you have given up all your material wealth to devote your time and energy for your work of art?

Do you think like a Bohemian?

Suggested questions about the philosophy of the “Bohemian lifestyle.”

- Do you think that an artist should suffer for his or her art?
- Is art that is created by poor, suffering artists, better or worse?
- Who do you think is a modern day Bohemian artist?

Come up with some of your own questions, too!

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 2: Understanding the libretto

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will read the libretto and understand its literary merits.

MATERIAL(S)

- LIBRETTO *La bohème*
- DVD *La bohème*

PROCEDURE(S)

- (1) Students are to read the libretto of *La bohème*. Upon completion, have a class discussion on the merit of text. Discuss points such as: is the libretto an effective piece of drama (or poetry)? or, what is the level of characterization within the libretto?
- (2) Have students add what they think should be included in the story to make a more complete drama. Discuss their responses.
- (3) Show Act I and discuss the merits of the drama. Does the class think that the story, with the music, is more or less effective as drama?
- (4) Discuss why a play or story must be altered to create a libretto for an opera. Does singing and the orchestra have an effect on the story? Are greater or fewer words needed to tell the story?

ASSESSMENT(S)

Value will be assigned for class participation. Students are to compose an essay around the topic: "Should a libretto be able to stand on its own as a piece of literature, or is the music necessary?"

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

This lesson could include debating the libretto as a piece of literature, poetry, or any other literary genre that the students are acquainted with.

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 3: Puccini, the master of opera

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will learn about Puccini as a master of Italian opera.

MATERIAL(S)

- Reference books about Puccini
- General reference books about 19th-century Europe (*not in Opera Box*)
- Internet access (*not in Opera Box*)
- Poster board (*not in Opera Box*)

PROCEDURE(S)

- (1) Divide class into groups and assign topics related to Puccini. Direct the class to research their specific topics and to prepare a presentation on that topic. *The nature and scope of the presentations are to the discretion of the teacher.*

Possible topics:

- Political and social culture of Italy during Puccini's lifetime
- Scientific and technological achievements
- Social life and class divisions
- Artistic and musical life in Italy and Europe
 - The rise of *verismo* opera
 - German opera and Wagner

- (2) Offer some guided (in-class) research time with students. Depending on students' ability to conduct research, additional guidance might be needed.
- (3) Each group is to create a piece of the timeline poster to be posted on the wall. It is suggested that the teacher predetermine what form the timeline will look like. For example, prior to handing out the poster board, mark the years and label the topics of each card. Set the number of facts and to be put on each poster.
- (4) Students will give oral presentations on their topic. Each group should create five questions about the topic they feel is the most important. Questions are to be submitted to the teacher prior to giving the presentation. The rest of the class should take notes on each presentation for a class-constructed test.
- (5) Put all questions together from each group and give the test.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Assign value for class participation and group cooperation. Also, each piece of the timeline must have a certain number of relevant points presented in a clean and clear manner.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

To help guide the students in the research, creating a checklist is recommended. Each item may be assigned value. For example:

TOPIC _____

RESEARCH CHECKLIST

- _____ Twenty facts of our topic and how they relate to Puccini
- _____ Organize all facts into chronological order
- _____ Three sentences describing each fact to be put on timeline
- _____ Proofread all sentences prior to putting them on the timeline
- _____ Complete by putting each fact on the timeline

CLASS PRESENTATION CHECKLIST

- _____ Prepare an outline describing research for class presentation
- _____ Assign speaking parts for each group member
- _____ Practice speech (with other class members observing)
- _____ Give presentation
- _____ Put piece of timeline on wall

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 4: Acting scenes from *La bohème*

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will act out scenes from *La bohème* to reinforce the concepts of the importance of acting as part of opera.

MATERIAL(S)

- LIBRETTO *La bohème*
- **ACTING EVALUATION** (*see following page*)

PROCEDURE(S)

- (1) Have students read all or a portion of Act I (where Mimì enters) and/or the Act IV finale death scene of *La bohème*.
- (2) In small groups, students will perform this or another portion of the opera. Special attention must be given to physical gestures. Exact reading of the text must also be included (no ad lib will be acceptable). Students should carefully read each line and think about how to physically interpret them.
- (3) Each group will perform with the rest of the class serving as an audience. Students should take notes on the effectiveness of each performance. Students should be able to make specific comments regarding physical movement and vocal articulation. See the **ACTING EVALUATION** example on following page.
- (4) After all performances are completed have a class discussion as to effectiveness of each one.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Value should be given to quality of the reviews of peers, class participation in discussion and acting performance.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

This lesson can be taught following various activities that may involve the study of the drama and history of acting. This lesson can be maximized when used as reinforcement of prior activities.

Videotaping the performances and presenting them on a public access or school channel may provide valuable public relations.

ACTING EVALUATION

Lesson 4

NAME OF OBSERVER _____

NAMES OF PERFORMERS _____

DIRECTIONS

Closely observe your peers as they perform scenes from *La bohème*. Look for the following elements in their acting. Be consistent and fair with each group.

- What was the single most effective gesture given by the group?
- Did the group “follow” each line from the text? Did they act out everything they were saying?
- Did the actors make eye contact with each other?
- Was the voice of the actors used to create variety and emotion in the scene?
- Give one suggestion to the group for them to improve their performance.

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 5: Translating *La bohème* into other genres

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will become familiar with the characters and their dramatic motivation. Students will have an understanding of the characters to be able to transfer information from one genre to another.

MATERIAL(S)

- LIBRETTO *La bohème*
- PERFORMANCE RUBRIC (*see following page*)

PROCEDURE(S)

- (1) As a class read all of Act I from *La bohème*. Have students read aloud as specific characters. Discuss if the plot realistic or plausible. Ask students if they have read or seen this story in any book, television, or movie.
- (2) In small groups, have students pick a certain excerpt of Act I libretto and put the text into another genre. For example, a group could take the scene when Mimì and Rodolfo first meet and rewrite the text as a rap, pop, or country song. In the translation, elements of the original text should be included. It is up to the teacher's discretion as to how much variation will be acceptable.
- (3) Have students perform their rewritten songs. Have students act as the audience and give feedback. Use Performance Rubric for evaluation. Discuss the effectiveness of each performance.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Value should be given for class participation and effectiveness of performance.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

PERFORMANCE RUBRIC

Lesson 5

NAME OF OBSERVER _____

NAMES OF PERFORMERS _____

DIRECTIONS

Observe each group and assess how they succeed in each category.

(1) Use of words in the translation:

Used exact words from libretto

Used most of the words from the libretto

Used some of the words from the libretto

Used none of the words from the libretto

(2) Conveyed the “spirit” of original emotion of the selected excerpt:

Conveyed all the emotion from the excerpt

Conveyed most of the emotion from the excerpt

Conveyed some of the emotion from the excerpt

Conveyed none of the emotion from the excerpt

(3) Creativity of the translation:

Extremely creative; performance made me think about the text in a new way

Very creative; performance had some unique ideas that caused me to think about the text in a new way

Somewhat creative; performance did not make me think about the text in a new way

Not creative; performance did not make me think about the text in a new way

(4) Create your own category: _____

OPERA BOX LESSON PLAN

La bohème

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 6: Miming *La bohème*

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will physically recreate scenes from *La bohème* by miming. They will understand the elements of the drama and be able to transfer that knowledge to act out silent scenes.

MATERIAL(S)

- LIBRETTO *La bohème*
- ACTING EVALUATION (*see following page*)

PROCEDURE(S)

- (1) Students will read selected scenes from the *La bohème* libretto. (See Unit B, lesson 5 for suggested scenes.)
- (2) Discuss the emotional elements that are of interest in the scene, and identify which emotions can be conveyed through physical actions versus verbal communication.
- (3) In small groups, students will choose a scene and work together to analyze the emotional make-up of that scene. Then, they will rehearse a scene by miming the actions. This will be acted out in class.
- (4) Students will mime their selected scenes with the class serving as an audience. Use ACTING EVALUATION as a guide.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Value will be given to accuracy in miming the scene. Detail and nuance should be emphasized. Class participation will also be assessed.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

There are many possible variations with this activity. For example, groups may not announce the scene they will be miming, letting the audience compete to guess what scene it is. The class could compare and contrast each performance and discuss the virtues of each performance.

ACTING EVALUATION

Lesson 6

NAME OF OBSERVER _____

NAMES OF PERFORMERS _____

DIRECTIONS

Closely observe your peers as they perform scenes from *La bohème*. Look for the following elements in their acting. Be consistent and fair with each group.

- What was the single most effective gesture given by the group?
- Did the group “follow” each line from the text? Did they act out everything they were saying?
- Did the actors make eye contact with each other?
- Was the voice of the actors used to create variety and emotion in the scene?
- Give one suggestion to the group to improve their performance.

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 7: Motives in *La bohème*

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will learn how dramatic ideas are represented musically with motives (or *leitmotif*) in Puccini's use of the orchestra.

MATERIAL(S)

- Reference books about Puccini
- Audio recording of *La bohème*
- Full and/or vocal score of *La bohème*

PROCEDURE(S)

Prior to teaching this lesson, it is recommended that the teacher read *The Complete Operas of Puccini*, pages 107–114, and *La bohème*, pages 3–25, for a basic understanding of the opera and explanations of motives.

- (1) Define motive and how it is represented in the music of an opera.
- (2) Play a few short excerpts (motives) for the class. Ask students to name all the instruments used. For example, in the opening scene, note that Puccini uses every instrument in the score and in various combinations to represent the “Bohemians at work or play.” Raise students’ awareness to Puccini’s speed in developing his ideas and the actual “clock time” as he does this. Suggest to students that these musical devices will be used repeatedly to enhance the story.
- (3) Play other motives Puccini uses in the opera. Have students describe what they think the music is trying to convey. Have them support their suggestions with musical examples, i.e., the end sounds sad because of the high, slow strings, etc.
- (4) Play all of Act IV and ask students to raise their hands when they hear a motive. Ask students if they hear the motives in variation or in the original way it was first played.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Students are to define a motive and be able to describe what motives they hear while listening to *La bohème*.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

A variation of this lesson could be, while explaining a motive, use the piano to play the examples. Then play the audio recording with the instrumentation.

A teacher with more knowledge of the score could isolate and play a motive as it reoccurs throughout the opera on the piano. Students, then could be asked to identify every time the motive is sounded.

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 8: The was a great performance and I know why!

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will learn to critically analyze elements of operatic performance.

MATERIAL(S)

- DVD *La bohème*
- Theater reviews from newspapers, etc. (*not part of Opera Box*)

PROCEDURE(S)

- (1) Have class discussion about theatre, movie, and/or television reviews in newspapers or television. Ask students about quality of these reviews. Do the students find them helpful? Why or why not? Suggest that the writers and readers both must settle on a set of criteria for the review to be successful.
- (2) Have student find reviews and analyze the criteria that the reviewer basis the review on. For example, acting, production, soundtrack, special effects, etc.
- (3) Students are to create a visual description (chart) describing the criteria used.
- (4) Show Act I of *La bohème* and have students evaluate the performance on the DVD based on their criteria on chart. Discuss the similar and dissimilar traits.
- (5) Have students revise the criteria to be tailored toward opera. Watch additional acts from *La bohème*.
- (6) Student will write a review of live performance of *La bohème*.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Value will be given to class participation, quality of evaluation chart and depth of analysis. Review of live performance should contain multiple elements.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

This lesson can be extended to include students writing a review about a live performance they attend. For example, this lesson could be started prior to attending a performance of *La bohème* and as a follow-up assignment, have students write a review about their experience. Post reviews on the school web site.

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 9: Musical characteristics of *La bohème*

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will develop analytical skills to identify the musical characteristics Puccini uses in “Chi è là?–Scusi–Una donna!”, the Act I meeting of Rodolfo and Mimì.

MATERIAL(S)

- Recording of Act I of *La bohème*
- Full or vocal score of *La bohème*
- PUCCINI’S MUSICAL CHOICES FOR DRAMA WORKSHEET (*see following pages*)

PROCEDURE(S)

- (1) Give handout to the class and give instructions for the lesson. Ask students to give general descriptions about each musical section played. Since this is one scene, students will need to listen very closely to the subtle changes. They are to use key words to describe the fundamentals of music.
- (2) Listen to the entire scene. Verbally identify the beginning of each section for students.
- (3) Break down each section by listening again to each section followed by a class discussion based on what the students hear. The full score may be used for more advanced students for further discussion of Puccini’s techniques.
- (4) Collect charts from each student.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Value will be assigned to class participation and acceptable answers on the chart.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

This lesson can be applied to any section of the opera or other works of music.

PUCCINI'S MUSICAL CHOICES FOR DRAMA

Lesson 9

NAME _____

DIRECTIONS

As you listen to the scene where Rodolfo and Mimì first meet, identify its different sections. Use the chart below to describe how musical elements are used to create contrast and movement. Your teacher will verbally identify each section. Page numbers refer to the vocal score. Numbers in “()” refer to rehearsal numbers.

PAGE	56	56	58 (#26)	60 (#27)
CHARACTER	Rodolfo, Mimì			
VOCAL RANGE	tenor, soprano			
TEMPO	<i>Lento</i>	<i>Agitato</i>	<i>Andante moderato</i>	<i>Un poco più mosso</i>
METER	common time			
DYNAMICS	<i>pp</i>			
ARTICULATION	short			
OTHER MUSICAL FEATURES	Both voices are in their low registers.			

PAGE	64 (#30)	66 (#31)	67 (#32)	70 (#35)
CHARACTERS				
VOCAL RANGE				
TEMPO	<i>Adantino affettuoso</i>	<i>Andante sostenuto</i>	<i>Andante lento</i>	<i>Andante lento</i>
METER				
DYNAMICS				
ARTICULATION				
OTHER MUSICAL FEATURES				

SCENE	71 (#36)	72 (#37)	73 (#38)
CHARACTER			
VOCAL RANGE			
TEMPO	<i>Andante calmo</i>	<i>Allegretto moderato</i>	<i>Andante molto sostenuto</i>
METER			
DYNAMICS			
ARTICULATION			
OTHER MUSICAL FEATURES			

Create your own Opera Box Lesson Plan and send it to us.

OPERA BOX LESSON PLAN

NAME(S)	SCHOOL
	PHONE/EMAIL
TITLE OF LESSON	CLASS AND GRADE LEVEL

OBJECTIVE(S)

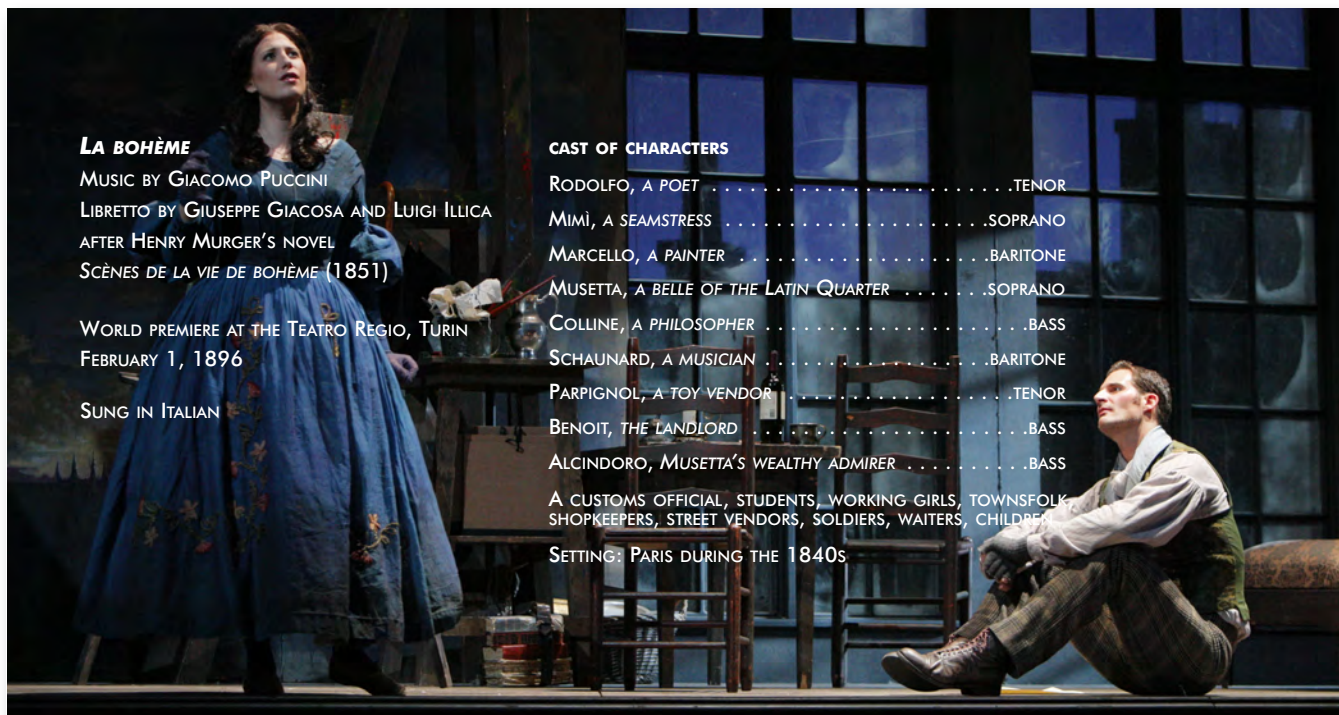
MATERIAL(S)

PROCEDURE(S)

ASSESSMENT(S)

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

PLEASE INCLUDE ANY ORIGINAL MATERIALS, IF POSSIBLE.



LA BOHÈME
 MUSIC BY GIACOMO PUCCINI
 LIBRETTO BY GIUSEPPE GIACOSA AND LUIGI ILICA
 AFTER HENRY MURGER'S NOVEL
 SCÈNES DE LA VIE DE BOHÈME (1851)

WORLD PREMIERE AT THE TEATRO REGIO, TURIN
 FEBRUARY 1, 1896

SUNG IN ITALIAN

CAST OF CHARACTERS

RODOLFO, A POETTENOR
MIMI, A SEAMSTRESSSOPRANO
MARCELLO, A PAINTERBARITONE
MUSETTA, A BELLE OF THE LATIN QUARTERSOPRANO
COLLINE, A PHILOSOPHERBASS
SCHAUNARD, A MUSICIANBARITONE
PARPIGNOL, A TOY VENDORTENOR
BENOIT, THE LANDLORDBASS
ALCINDORO, MUSETTA'S WEALTHY ADMIRERBASS

A CUSTOMS OFFICIAL, STUDENTS, WORKING GIRLS, TOWNSFOLK
 SHOPKEEPERS, STREET VENDORS, SOLDIERS, WAITERS, CHILDREN

SETTING: PARIS DURING THE 1840s

The opera opens with a very brief, spirited introduction.

(I) OPENING BARS

Allegro vivace



ACT I

Marcello, a painter, and Rodolfo, a writer, work on their respective pursuits in an ill-heated attic atelier. Marcello complains of the cold and of the coldheartedness of his ex-mistress, Musetta. Rodolfo offers to warm the room by burning his manuscript. Colline, a philosopher, blusters in – no pawn shop will take his books on Christmas Eve. Schaunard, a musician, suddenly bursts into the room with much-needed food, wine and firewood. He relates the story of an eccentric nobleman who hired him to play his violin until his parrot died. After three long days, Schaunard was able to collect his fee only by feeding the bird some poisoned parsley.

Schaunard advises them to save the food for later – Christmas Eve should be celebrated with dinner at the Café Momus. While dividing the remaining money, they are interrupted by the insistent knocking of Benoit, who demands payment of the rent, long past due. The Bohemians invite him in and after priming him with wine, get the old man to admit he has a young mistress. Shocked to discover he also has a wife, the four men pretend to be horrified and quickly usher him out of the room. As the others leave for the café, Rodolfo stays behind to finish an article. He promises to catch up with them later.

Hearing another knock at the door, Rodolfo is surprised to find an attractive young woman, a neighbor whose candle needs a light. He notices her harsh cough and pale complexion, and she soon faints in his arms. Once revived she prepares to leave only to find her key is missing. A draft puts the room into total darkness, and together they begin to hunt for the key. Rodolfo silently pockets the key and suggests they wait for the moonlight to aid their search. He takes a moment to describe himself – a poor poet, rich only in his dreams and visions, who has now found love in the eyes of a stranger.

(2) CHE GELIDA MANINA (RODOLFO)

Andantino affectuoso

Che ge - li - da ma - ni - na, se la la - sci ri - scal - dar. Cer -

car che gio - va? Al bu - io non si tro - va.

TRANSLATION: HOW COLD YOUR LITTLE HAND IS. LET ME WARM IT.

Her name is Mimì, she says, a seamstress, who in her little room, embroiders flowers that are her private symbols of love and springtime.

(3) MI CHIAMANO MIMÌ (MIMÌ)

Andante lento

Sì. Mi chia - ma - no Mi - mì, ma il mio no - me è Lu - ci - a.

La sto - ria mia è bre - ve: — A te - la o a se - ta ri - ca - mo in ca - sa e fuo - ri

TRANSLATION: THEY CALL ME MIMÌ BUT MY REAL NAME IS LUCIA. MY STORY ISN'T LONG: I EMBROIDER ON LINEN AND SILK.

Life's fairest flower is love, and she returns his adoring affection.

(4) O SOAVE FANCIULLA (RODOLFO, THEN MIMÌ)

Largo sostenuto 3 3 3

O so - a - ve fan - ciul - la, — o dol - ce vi - so di mi - te cir - con - fu - so al - ba lu - nar, —
 in te, rav - vi - so — il so - gno ch'io vor - re - i sem - pre so - gnar!

TRANSLATION: SWEET GIRL, YOUR GENTLE FACE IS BATHED IN MOONLIGHT. IN YOU I DREAM, I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO DREAM.

Rodolfo's friends call from the street, and he tells them to hold two seats at the café.

ACT II

The Latin Quarter bustles with shoppers and vendors on Christmas Eve.

(5) OPENING TO ACT II (ORCHESTRA)

Allegro fucoso

fff marcatisimo

Schaunard examines some musical instruments, Colline buys a rare book and Rodolfo buys Mimì a bonnet. Parpignol appears with his cart and dazzles the young children with toys. The Bohemians gather at the Café Momus as planned and soon after, Musetta appears in the company of Alcindoro, her wealthy, aging admirer. Trying to catch Marcello's jealous eye, she openly describes herself as alluring to all men.

(6) QUANDO M'EN VO' (MUSETTA)

Tempo di Valzer lento con molta grazia ed eleganza

Quan - do me'n vo' — quan - do me'n vo' so -
 let - ta per la via la gen - te so - sta e mi - ra...
a tempo *quasi rit.* *a tempo*

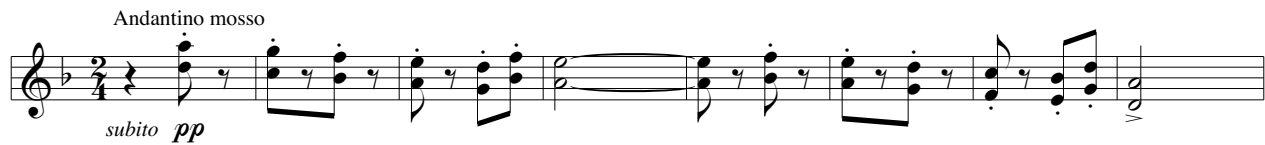
TRANSLATION: WHENEVER I GO OUT ALONE, PEOPLE STOP AND LOOK AT ME ...

In a ruse to distract Alcindoro, she pretends her shoe hurts and sends him off to the cobbler. Once reunited with Marcello, Musetta and the other Bohemians escape the café amidst a military band, assuring the waiter that Alcindoro will pick up the tab when he returns.

ACT III

Act III opens with orchestration evocative of snowflakes.

(7) OPENING TO ACT III (ORCHESTRA)



On a dreary winter morning, Mimì appears at the Barrière d'Enfer ("Hell's gate") bordering the edge of the city. She approaches the tavern where Marcello and Musetta are living, he by painting and she by singing. Mimì asks for his help – Rodolfo has become insanely and unjustifiably jealous. After cruelly demanding that she find another lover, he stormed out the night before. Marcello assures her that he is inside and promises to talk to him. The sound of his voice puts Mimì into hiding. When interrogated, Rodolfo reveals the real reason for the split – Mimì's health is getting worse, and the squalid conditions of his apartment will only hasten her illness. Mimì's coughing betrays her hiding place, and Rodolfo rushes to her. Marcello hears Musetta flirting with a stranger and angrily goes inside. Mimì bids Rodolfo adieu, but listening to Marcello and Musetta fight, they agree to stay together until spring.

(8) DONDE LIETA (MIMÌ)

Lento molto

Don-de lie - ta u - sci al tuo gri - do d'a - mo - re, tor - na so - la Mi -

Andantino

mì al so - li - ta - rio ni - do. Ri - tor - na un' al - tra vol - ta a in -

tes - ser fin - ti fior!

TRANSLATION: YES, BACK TO THE LONELY ROOM I LEFT WHEN WE FIRST MET. I'LL RETURN TO MAKING MY SILK FLOWERS.

ACT IV

Months later, Marcello and Rodolfo are again at work in the garret, having broken off with their respective mistresses. Neither can concentrate, however, as their thoughts are consumed by the women. Colline and Schaunard arrive with lunch, and the four make a mockery of the meager offering by pretending it is a lavish banquet. At the height of their merriment, Musetta bursts in with news that Mimì has collapsed on the stairs. Musetta found her alone, almost dead. Her dying wish is to see Rodolfo one last time. Her hands are cold, and Mimì asks for a muff. Musetta takes off her earrings and tells Marcello to sell them for medicine and to find a doctor. She leaves with him to fetch the muff. Colline takes off his beloved coat, and preparing to pawn it, he and Schaunard leave the lovers alone.

(9) VECCHIA ZIMARRA (COLLINE)

Allegretto moderato e triste

Vec - chia zi-mar-ra, sen-ti, io re-sto al pian, tu a - scen - de-re il sa - cro mon-te or de - vi.

poco rit.

a tempo

TRANSLATION: LISTEN, MY DEAR OLD COAT, I SHALL REMAIN HERE ...

Mimì admits she still loves Rodolfo, and the two reminisce about their happy past.

(10) SONO ANDATI? (MIMÌ)

Andante calmo

So - no an - da - ti? Fin - ge - vo di dor - mi - re — per - chè vol - li con te sol - la re - sta - re — Ho tan - te
co - se che ti vo - glio di - re — ou - na sol - la, ma gran - de co - me il ma - re. —

TRANSLATION: ARE THEY GONE? I PRETENDED TO SLEEP SO WE COULD BE ALONE. I'VE SO MUCH TO SAY TO YOU. BUT ONLY ONE THING I WANTED TO SAY ...

Suddenly she is racked by a coughing fit. The Bohemians return with the necessary provisions. As Rodolfo turns away for a moment, Schaunard observes that Mimì has just died. Comforted by his friends, Rodolfo cries out her name in anguish.



b Lucca, December 22, 1858; *d* Brussels, November 29, 1924

Giacomo Puccini was born into a family of court composers and organists in the historic city of Lucca, Italy. With a strong feeling of tradition in the Puccini family, it was expected that Giacomo would assume his deceased father's position as *Maestro di Cappella* when he came of age. By 14 he already was playing organ in a number of the town's churches.

Albina Magi, the composer's mother, also came from a family of musicians. Her brother, Fortunato, became her son's first music teacher. His uncle was a strict instructor and was known to kick Puccini when he made mistakes. For his part, Puccini was unruly, easily bored and preferred to hunt for bird's nests rather than study. Seeing little progress, Albina decided a new teacher was in order and sent the boy to Carlo Angeloni, a former pupil of her husband. Giacomo's attitude and study habits quickly changed.

Money was scarce for the family, and to supplement his church earnings Puccini would play piano at the local bars and at houses of "ill repute." He withheld a small percentage of his earnings for cigarettes and began the bad habit of smoking (which ultimately caused his death). As a young man, Puccini was determined to be rich and independent. His teacher introduced him to opera through the study of Verdi's piano scores. Then in 1879, Puccini attended his first opera performance, *Aida*, and was deeply moved – his destiny was to be a composer for the theater.

He knew it was necessary to study in the Italian operatic capital, Milan. After completing studies at the Pacini Institute of Music in Lucca, Puccini enrolled at the Milan Conservatory in 1880 under the auspices of a royal scholarship. His living expenses were provided by a loan from an uncle but money was always tight. Puccini lived the bohemian life of



*A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2010 production of La bohème*

a poor student and became acquainted with many important musical and literary figures. For a short while, he shared a room with the composer Pietro Mascagni, who became famous for his one-act opera *Cavalleria rusticana*. To save money, the two of them would cook meals in their room and, as this was strictly forbidden, one would play the piano loudly to drown out the noise of pots and pans. One can see how the composer drew from his own life experiences in the writing of his opera, *La bohème*.

In 1883 at the age of 25, Puccini graduated with a diploma in composition from the Milan Conservatory. His thesis composition, *Capriccio sinfonico*, was played by the student orchestra and received high praise from influential critics. This was the start of a celebrated career.



*A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2005 production of Tosca*



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2004 production of *Madame Butterfly*

librettist Ferdinando Fontana began to canvass the opera to the broader circle of the Italian intelligentsia. One of these individuals was the highly influential librettist and composer, Arrigo Boito, who was instrumental in getting *Le villi* staged.

The reception to the new work was mixed, but the revised two-act version was staged in a number of cities outside of Italy (a remarkable feat for such a young composer). Puccini's next opera, *Edgar*, however, was a resounding critical failure, yet the astute publisher, Giulio Ricordi, found fault in the libretto only and promise in the music. He pitted himself against the shareholders of his publishing house who demanded that Puccini be released from retainer. Ricordi's confidence was rewarded with *Manon Lescaut*, Puccini's first true success.

In 1884, Puccini became acquainted with Elvira Gemignani who was encouraged by her husband, a pharmacist and former classmate of Puccini's, to take voice lessons with the composer. Shortly after his mother's death, he was joined by Elvira and her daughter, Fosca, in Milan. She left her son, Renato, with her husband. Two years later she gave birth to their only child, Antonio, which caused a great scandal in Puccini's birthplace of Lucca – his family, very conventional and religious, was outraged. He seldom visited that city again in his lifetime.

With the popularity of *Manon Lescaut*, Puccini was now generally considered by the Italian art circle to be Verdi's successor (even by the great composer

Puccini was not a prolific composer. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he produced his operas at long intervals, partly because of his fastidiousness in choosing subjects, several of which he took up only to abandon after several months, and partly because of his constant demands for modifications of the texts. Much of his time, too, was spent in hunting in the marshes around his home and in trips abroad to supervise revivals of his works.

The composer's first work for the stage, *Le villi*, was originally submitted to a contest sponsored by the wealthy music publisher, Edoardo Sonzogno. The one-act opera received not even honorable mention, but Puccini was certain of its merit. He and



A scene from The Minnesota Opera's 2000 production of *Turandot*

himself). As the royalties began rolling in, Puccini began to show a predilection for machines and gadgets, in particular fast automobiles and motor boats. His solitary nature drew him to a purchase a villa near the sea, surrounded by the mountains at Torre del Lago. Through the years, this villa became a home base where he could enjoy his passion for hunting and fishing, along with the nature and silence of the surroundings.

During the 1890s, Puccini began working with Luigi Illica, who worked out the scheme and drafted the dialogue, and the poet and playwright Giuseppe Giacosa, who put the lines into verse. Although they had participated on *Manon Lescaut* (in a string of several librettists) their first true collaboration was *La bohème* in 1896, followed four years later by *Tosca* and then *Madame Butterfly* four years after that. Giacosa died in 1906, putting an end to the successful team that produced three of Puccini's most enduring works.

In 1904, Giacomo and Elvira were finally married legally, following her first husband's death. Their relationship, however, was a constant storm. She was insanely jealous, and a letter, written prior to their union, stated her decision

to leave him. Many of her accusations about him were not unfounded. The composer had quite a weakness for women and carried on many extramarital affairs throughout his life.



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2004 production of *Madame Butterfly*

While Puccini was recuperating from an automobile accident, a young girl named Doria Manfredi was hired as a nurse and maid. She remained in the household as the Puccinis' maid. Elvira saw the makings of an affair and immediately discharged her. But that was not enough. She continued her slanderous accusations through the small village, and the townspeople, aware of her husband's past philandering, quite naturally believed her. The innocent girl, totally humiliated, took poison and died after five days of

unbearable suffering. Giacomo took refuge in Rome and Elvira fled to Milan. Doria's family sued Elvira following an autopsy that proved Doria's virginity.

Puccini and his wife lived apart for four months while Elvira persisted in defending her legal position. The case was tried and she was sentenced to five months' imprisonment – but Puccini made a large financial settlement with the Manfredi family and the lawsuit was dropped. In September of 1909, Giacomo, Elvira and Antonio were reunited at Torre. A month later he wrote, "In my home I have peace – Elvira is good – and the three of us live happily together."

Puccini's later operas were quite varied in their styles and subjects. *La fanciulla del West*, set in the American West, is notable for its advanced impressionistic orchestration and composition. *La rondine* was designed to be a musical comedy in the Viennese style but seemed more related to *La traviata* than to *Die Fledermaus*. *Il trittico* was an evening of one-act operas that are quite a mixed bag: *Il tabarro* was Puccini's bow toward the verismo style; *Suor Angelica* is a gripping emotional drama set in a nunnery; *Gianni Schicchi* is a comic masterpiece that features Puccini at his most exuberant. There is a thought that Puccini was mocking his own success with this piece.

At the age of 60, the composer set out to write an opera that was atypical of his past style. He studied the developments in contemporary music and based the new work on Count Carlo Gozzi's fable about the cruel Chinese princess Turandot. The completion of the work was cut short due to his ill-health.

Puccini had been dealing with a persistent cough for months. He began complaining of stinging sore throats and his diagnosis revealed cancer of the throat. He traveled to Brussels to receive radium therapy, accompanied by his son and stepdaughter – Elvira had bronchitis and remained in Milan. Radioactive needles were inserted into the tumor. Initially, the doctor was optimistic, but four days later, the composer suffered a heart attack. Puccini died on November 29, 1924 and his remains are now entombed in the chapel of his villa at Torre.

Although *Turandot* was left unfinished, the conductor Arturo Toscanini entrusted its completion to another Ricordi composer, Franco Alfano. In 1926, the opera premiered under the baton of Toscanini. Out of respect for the composer, the maestro stopped where Puccini had written his last notes. He turned to the audience and emotionally said, “At this point the master laid down his pen.”

Puccini has been much maligned for his flirtation with popular music, but he had an uncanny feel for a good story and talent for enthralling yet economical music. His experiments with tonality and form, while constant, were always subtle, and, unlike his contemporary Stravinsky, he did not seem to need to be controversial. His melodies are mostly simple stepwise vocal lines, yet with them he managed to create arias of astonishing beauty. The use of orchestra is economical and to the point – few operas of his have overtures and Puccini often captures the right dramatic moments with just a splash of colorful chords. Though his personal life was plagued with self-doubt and laborious perfectionism, Puccini profoundly influenced the world of opera with a deep understanding of music, drama and humanity.



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1995 production of Turandot

GIACOMO PUCCINI – CATALOGUE OF OPERAS

TITLE	PREMIERE
<i>Le villi</i> (<i>The Willis</i>)	Milan, Teatro dal Verme, May 31, 1884 <i>leggenda drammatica</i> ; libretto by Ferdinando Fontana, after Alphonse Karr's <i>Les willis</i>
<i>Edgar</i>	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, April 21, 1889 <i>dramma lirico</i> ; libretto by Ferdinando Fontana, after Alfred de Musset's <i>La coupe et les lèvres</i>
<i>Manon Lescaut</i>	Turin, Teatro Regio, February 1, 1893 <i>dramma lirico</i> ; libretto by Domenico Oliva and Luigi Illica, after Abbé Prévost's <i>L'histoire du chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut</i>
<i>La bohème</i>	Turin, Teatro Regio, February 1, 1896 <i>opera</i> ; libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, after Henry Murger's <i>Scènes de la vie de bohème</i>
<i>Tosca</i>	Rome, Teatro Costanzi, January 14, 1900 <i>melodramma</i> ; libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, after Victorien Sardou's <i>La Tosca</i>
<i>Madama Butterfly</i>	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, February 17, 1904 <i>tragedia giapponese</i> ; libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, after David Belasco's stage version of a magazine story by John Luther Long
<i>La fanciulla del West</i> (<i>The Girl of the Golden West</i>)	New York, Metropolitan Opera, December 10, 1910 <i>opera</i> ; libretto by Guelfo Civinini and Carlo Zangarini, after David Belasco's <i>The Girl of the Golden West</i>
<i>La rondine</i> (<i>The Swallow</i>)	Monte Carlo, Opéra, March 27, 1917 <i>commedia lirica</i> ; libretto by Giuseppe Adami, after A. M. Willner and Heinz Reichert
<i>Il trittico</i> (<i>The Triptych</i>)	New York, Metropolitan Opera, December 14, 1918 <i>three one act operas</i>
– <i>Il tabarro</i> (<i>The Cloak</i>)	– libretto by Giuseppe Adami, after Didier Gold's <i>La houppelande</i>
– <i>Suor Angelica</i> (<i>Sister Angelica</i>)	– libretto by Giovacchino Forzano
– <i>Gianni Schicchi</i>	– libretto by Giovacchino Forzano, developed from a few lines in Dante's <i>Inferno</i>
<i>Turandot</i>	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, April 25, 1926 <i>dramma lirico</i> ; Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni, after Carlo Gozzi

“Let the public judge” – brave words for an insecure composer like Giacomo Puccini, who wavered between his choices for operatic treatment with great uncertainty. Yet that was the composer’s response when confronted by Ruggero Leoncavallo (of *Pagliacci* fame), who claimed Puccini had stolen his idea to set Henry Murger’s scenes of Bohemian life in the 1830s.

Leoncavallo probably was not too far off the mark, as Puccini would reveal his penchant for poaching when he stole Sardou’s *Tosca* from Alberto Franchetti. He had shown Puccini a libretto for *La bohème* as early as 1892, and Puccini had a predilection for honing in on a subject once someone else had displayed an interest in it. Privately, he didn’t think much of Leoncavallo’s libretto-writing skills (he had also been one of the first of five in the preparation of the book for *Manon Lescaut*). Nonetheless, Puccini obviously didn’t have his thoughts together when they accidentally met in a Milan coffee shop one March afternoon. He let it be known his intentions for his own *Bohème*, and the slip of the tongue left the two colleagues bitter enemies. They resorted to airing their differences in the local Italian papers.

Puccini’s publisher, Giulio Ricordi, immediately inquired about obtaining the rights. Unfortunately there were two published versions of Murger’s stories, which first appeared in a Parisian newspaper as a series of short vignettes. In 1849, Théodore Barrière had approached Murger about a possible play adaptation, which turned into *La vie de bohème*. The success of the play led to a lucrative book deal in 1851, entitled *Scènes de la vie de bohème*. While the play was still controlled by Barrière and subject to copyright laws, the book had fallen into the public domain with the death of an heirless Murger in 1861. Exclusivity to a single composer was not an option.

Ricordi decided to go forward anyway and engaged Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa as librettists. The two had also been involved in *Manon Lescaut* and already had experienced Puccini’s prickly demeanor in respect to text modifications. Still, they probably didn’t imagine the job that was in store when they signed on the dotted line.



The problem was with the book itself. Murger’s *Scènes* is a disconnected sequence of events with a loose configuration of often unrelated characters. The librettists began by envisioning their work in terms of a series of tableaux instead of acts. Guided by a sense of impressionist theater, they developed captivating atmospheric episodes around the fairly thin plot line involving Mimì and Rodolfo’s love story. In fact, very few of Murger’s original scenes survive in the final version of Puccini’s opera.

Puccini also drew on his real-life experiences. As a young music student in Milan, he lived on a scant diet of onions,



olive oil and beans, wandering by cafés wishing he could afford to go inside. Bohemianism in Italy was delayed by the Risorgimento, so his fellow starving artists at the time included soon-to-be verismo composers Pietro Mascagni (his roommate for awhile), Franchetti and Leoncavallo. At the time they resembled the four male principals, Rodolfo, Marcello, Colline and Schaunard, before embarking on their professional careers, each falling in and out of friendship as they competed professionally. Delving into the past, Puccini nostalgically incorporated his graduation piece, the *Capriccio Sinfonico*, into the opening bars of the new opera.

The specifics of the libretto became a hot issue as the project evolved, and the first drafts of the opera also bear little resemblance to what we understand to be *La bohème* today. Originally it was to begin with the present Act II setting in the Latin Quarter, but early on it was conceived to both open and close in the artists' garret, giving the piece a certain degree of unity. Greater roles were assigned to Colline and Schaunard, the latter being given his own Act IV aria about the capriciousness of women. One of the greatest changes was the deletion of an entire act set in the courtyard of Musetta's lodgings – bringing threats of resignation by the librettists who were retained only by the cool handling of Ricordi. The scene in question involves the eviction of Musetta on the day she has planned a party. As her furniture is removed, the Bohemians decide to have the soirée out front. The scene has little continuity with any other part of the opera except that it is here Mimì meets the ethereal Vicomte while she is dressed in one of Musetta's gowns. Her flirting and eventual departure with the young nobleman leaves Rodolfo in a jealous frenzy and gives credence to his later denunciations in Act III. Puccini wished that Mimì's character remain untarnished, a *femme fragile* in direct opposition to Musetta's *femme fatale*. He got his way, though some dramatic issues remain unresolved. With Rodolfo's now-unsubstantiated declarations of Mimì's infidelity in Act III, the Vicomte receives a casual, unprepared reference in Act IV as Mimì's live-in companion after her split with Rodolfo.

Act IV also posed some problems, and here the librettists carried the day. Puccini wanted to open with Mimì on her deathbed, but Illica and Giacosa feared this bore too close a resemblance to the final scene of *La traviata*. Their suggestions of a political dialogue for Schaunard and a brindisi toasting the Water Drinkers (a pseudo-Freemasonesque group Murger had sponsored for those too poor to drink wine) were fused into the Bohemian's hijinks just prior to Mimì's arrival. Further continuity was drawn between Act I and Act IV by opening them similarly – with Rodolfo and Marcello alone together in their garret dwelling, bemoaning





their current condition, first without heat, later without women.

The end product is a truly remarkable work. Out of enough material, as Illica quipped, “for 10 operas,” Puccini crafted a surprisingly concise score, complete with short recurrent melodic references (though not nearly as codified as Wagner) and a brilliant use of the orchestral palette. Equally impressive is his handling of side-by-side comedy and pathos – something not easily achieved – and his ease in carrying us from one emotion to the other. In contrast, with its closer adherence to the original material, Leoncavallo’s opera is weighted by the overall tragedy and its adaptation to more traditional operatic formulas, leading to its virtual eclipse some 10 years after the premiere. Puccini won the day, as the popularity of his *La bohème* continues to hold true.



b Paris, March 27, 1822; d Paris, January 28, 1861

La vie bohémienne is a phenomenon not unique to the Latin Quarter of 19th-century Paris. Its timelessness is evidenced throughout history, from the Moulin Rouge of late 19th-century France and early 20th-century Weimar-era Berlin, New York's Greenwich Village and Harlem Renaissance, the Beat Generation of the 1950s and Andy Warhol's Pop Art Factory, to Europe's nomadic gypsies living a marginal existence, their origins lending the lifestyle its descriptive name. The vogue for Bohemianism in Paris during the 1830s was, in part, a reaction to the overthrow of the restrictive Bourbon monarchy and subsequent triumph of the bourgeoisie. But it was Henry Murger who was at ground zero, giving the Bohemian life its widespread appeal a decade later by way of twenty-two vignettes, first serialized in the newspaper *Le Corsaire-Satan*, then presented as a play (*La vie bohème*) and finally published as a novel (*Scènes de la vie de bohème*).



Murger's tales were adapted from his personal experiences as a starving artist – early in his professional life he turned his back on law and pursued a career in writing. By the time he had been appointed to the provocative French newspaper in 1845, he and his friends had lived through most of the events detailed in the *Scènes*, often in appalling poverty and destitution. Bohemia was seen as a passage for any serious artists in their 20s who sought to make a name for themselves. State sponsorship had slackened, yet painters, writers and musicians still required a significant amount free time to hone their craft. Art was created for its own sake for a speculative market consisting of the bourgeois philistine rather than the royal patron. Consequently, many were reduced to near financial ruin – debt, disease and death were constantly on the horizon. The dark labyrinth of pre-Haussmann Paris afforded a variety of itinerant living opportunities. One of Murger's group of impoverished Water Drinkers (who drank water as not to

Today, as of old, every man who enters on an artistic career, without any other means of livelihood than his art itself, will be forced to walk in the paths of Bohemia ... Bohemia is a stage in artistic life; it is the preface to the Academy, the Hôtel Dieu, or the Morgue.

— Henry Murger

Preface to *Scènes de la vie de bohème*



offend those who couldn't afford wine), known only as Karol, slept in a tree; another, evicted from his lodgings, walked the streets for hours, only to drop from hunger and exhaustion; and yet another, known as *le Christ*, was one of many to fall victim to tuberculosis after a long bout with the illness. An acquaintance, Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, better known today as Nadar, was forced to walk around Paris for several days dressed as a Turk because he didn't have sufficient funds to pay for a costume rental and redeem his street clothes. Murger himself jokes of a time when he was unable to receive a visitor because he had no trousers – he and his roommate shared a single pair.

Murger's circle is a varied group, encompassing both the famous and the forgotten, many of whom found

their way into the tales. The novel's poet, Rodolphe is, of course, the author himself. The painter Marcel is an agglomeration of two artists, Tabar and Lazare, and a work referenced in the novel (and opera), *Passage of the Red Sea*, is an actual epic painting Tabar was unable to complete due to lack of resources. (It was reworked into *Niobe and Her Children* and presented at the Salon of 1842.) Colline is another mix of two personages, the philosophers Jean Wallon and Jean Trapadoux. Wallon was known for his outer garment with enormous pockets filled with books, and Trapadoux was called "the green giant" because of his unusual height and long green topcoat. Schaunard is derived from Alexandre Schanne, first a painter, then a musician, whose musical composition *The Influence of Blue in the Arts* is cited in the novel, and whose episode with the poisoned parrot is relayed in the opera. Another

[Musette] was twenty, and for her luxury was almost a matter of existence. She might do without it for a time, but she could not give it up completely. Knowing her inconstancy, she had never consented to padlock her heart with an oath of fidelity. She had been ardently loved by many young fellows for whom she had herself felt a strong fancy, and she had always acted towards them with far-sighted probity; the engagements into which she entered were simple, frank and rustic as the love making of Molière's peasants ... Thus she passed her youth, her mind caught by every straw blown by the breeze of fancy, causing the happiness of a great many and almost happy herself.

— *Scènes de la vie de bohème*, Chapter XIX

The character of Mimì is a more complicated affair and can be summarized as an aggregation of all of the women in Murger's life. The nicer qualities are derived from the author's first love, Angèle, a cousin who later married someone else, and a married woman, Marie Fonblanc, whom he befriended. A completely unrelated tale in his oeuvre, "Francine's Muff," gives us much of the operatic Mimì – the first meeting of the lovers, the extinguished candle, the lost key (which *she* hides instead of him), the search in the moonlight and the persistent cough. She represents Murger's version of the era's much-sought-after feminine ideal, the *grisette* which had achieved mythical proportions by the 1840s. Diametrically opposed to the nefarious *lorettes* (a group of femme fatales to which Musetta belongs), the *grisette* typically was a woman from the country, 18 years old and unmarried, who finds lodgings in the Latin Quarter, at that time relatively inexpensive because of abundance of young students who lived there. She generally did handiwork at home (i.e. making artificial flowers), as Paris was at that time a major center for manufacturing. Her mores were slightly looser than those of a bourgeois girl, and the *grisette*

The Bohemians know everything and go everywhere, according as they have patent leather pumps or burst boots. They are to be met one day leaning against the mantelshelf in a fashionable drawing room, and the next seated in the arbor of some suburban dancing place. They cannot take ten steps on the Boulevard without meeting a friend, and thirty, no matter where, without encountering a creditor.

— Henry Murger

Preface to *Scènes de la vie de bohème*

philosopher from the *Scènes*, Barbemouche, didn't quite make it into the opera, which is probably just as well since Murger didn't much care for the two people he used for inspiration – the writers Charles Barbara and Charles Baudelaire.

Of the women, Murger coupled both Schaunard and Colline, encumbrances that were later removed for Puccini's opera. Schaunard's belle, Phémie Teinturière has no historical counterpart, nor does the mysterious Madame Colline, who is only spoken of but never seen – she prefers to stay at home to edit her husband's manuscripts. Musette, on the other hand, was based on a notorious vixen of the Latin Quarter, Marie-Christine Roux. A pitch-deprived chanteuse and frequent artist's model (including Ingres), she survives in posterity through her nudes with the photographer Nadar – the photos were the first studies of that genre to be printed. She was depicted with less flattery in a novel, *Adventures of Mademoiselle Mariette*, by another of Murger's associates, the writer Champfleury, who used their brief affair to write a bitter memoir. Lovers were easily shared as women were able to move freely in Bohemia, unimpeded by respectable society's morality.

Rodolphe then met Mimì, whom he had formerly known when she was the mistress of one of his friends; and he made her his own. There was at first a great outcry amongst Rodolphe's friends when they learned this union, but as Mademoiselle Mimì was very taking, not at all prudish, and could stand tobacco-smoke and literary conversations without a headache, they became accustomed to her and treated her as a comrade. Mimì was a charming girl, and especially adapted for both the plastic and poetical sympathies of Rodolphe.

[...]

The various opulence of some of her new friends caused a forest of ambitious ideas to spring up in the mind of Mademoiselle Mimì, who up till then had only had modest tastes, and was content with the necessities of life that Rodolphe did his best to procure for her. Mimì began to dream of silks, velvet, and lace. And, despite Rodolphe's prohibition, she continued to frequent these women, who were all of one mind in persuading her to break off with the Bohemian who could not even give her a hundred and fifty francs to buy a stuff dress.

"Pretty as you are," said her advisers, "you can easily secure a better position. You have only to look for it."

And Mademoiselle Mimì began to look.



had no qualms about moving in with a man to ease her financial burden. She was generally thought of as compassionate, thoughtful and understanding, the only drawback being her willingness to withdraw if a better offer came along. Students, idle young bourgeois and even minor nobility found them very appealing as temporary, yet caring companions. These women were a denial of female intellect and creativity, instead pursuing romantic love.

The darker side of the grisette is glaringly apparent in the less flattering portrayal of Lucille Louvet, with whom Murger had a long, tempestuous relationship. Little of Lucille made it into *Mimi* of the opera, other than a passing reference to her real name (“I’m called Mimi, although my name is Lucia ...”) and her death by consumption. It is true *Mimi* shacks up with a rich viscount midway through the opera, but nothing compares to the living hell Murger vividly chronicles in his *Scènes* with his *Mimi*. After several failed attempts to be together (and Lucille/*Mimi*’s various flings with other men), Murger/Rodolphe cannot bring himself to visit his dying ex-lover in the hospital. Prompted by his friends to claim her body, Rodolphe waits too long, her corpse ending up on the dissection table.

In spite of this veil of death and destitution, the *Scènes* are told with witty repartee and élan. Murger and his companions keep landlord Benoit and various other creditors at bay, while entertaining lavish midnight parties and expensive dinners at the Café Momus, an actual restaurant Murger and his friends inhabited (during leaner times they would take over the smoking room with the initial outlay of only five sous, the cost of a single cup of coffee). It appears Murger’s characters are not necessarily short of financial opportunity, but whatever cash is earned seems to slip through their fingers with relative ease. One senses that Murger’s Bohemians have deeper pockets than they let on via their bourgeois roots – among the author’s real-life friends, more than one came from families of considerable means.

We will also cite a singular variety of Bohemians who might be called amateurs. They are not the least curious. They find in Bohemian life an existence full of seductions, not to dine every day, to sleep in the open air on wet nights, and to dress in nankeen in the month of December seems to them the paradise of human felicity, and to enter it some abandon the family home, and others the study which leads to an assured result.

— Henry Murger
Preface to *Scènes de la vie de bohème*



factory, Baudelaire became famous and dandified, and three days after signing his book deal, Murger left the Latin Quarter for good, taking residence in the comfortable surrounds of Paris’ Right Bank. The author never felt he had betrayed his Bohemian roots, though he would never find a literary success equal to his *Scènes*. And, with greater irony, he would die an early death at the age of 38, from the unhealthy consequences of his unbridled youth.

Murger himself warned of distinguishing serious Bohemians from aristocratic or bourgeois *poseurs* (those living the life to spite their families or because it was fashionable), yet he also cautioned that one should not remain in Bohemia for too long and punctuated his masterpiece with a chapter on that subject, “Youth is Fleeting.” Marie-Christine Roux managed to escape by amassing a small fortune as a high-priced call girl, only to die with it as her ship sank in the Mediterranean. Lazare moved into a house inherited from his father, Schanne took over the family toy



1840 (YEAR OF THE OPERA'S SETTING)

HISTORY AND POLITICS

- Queen Victoria marries her first cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.
- Following the Durham report of 1838, in which union was recommended, an act is passed uniting British provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. Canada is awarded independence by this British statute.
- In China the formal beginning of the Opium War is declared.
- On the death of Prussian king Frederick William III, his son Frederick William IV succeeds to the throne. Welcomed by liberals for his "romantic" reputation, he quickly disappoints them and comes under the influence of an effective, conservative court clique.
- A Spanish slave ship, the *Amistad*, arrives in Connecticut with 53 Africans in command. Slaves on board the ship rebelled while the ship was en voyage from one Cuban port to another, killing the captain and all but two of the crew.
- France, Britain and Russia enter the war between the Ottoman empire and Egypt on the side of the Ottomans.
- William Henry Harrison is elected President of the United States, having won the hearts of the electorate with his "Log Cabin and Hard Cider" campaign emphasizing his links with the common people.
- The ashes of Napoleon I are buried at Les Invalides in Paris.
- In France, Louis Napoleon (later Emperor Napoleon III) is jailed after staging a coup to overthrow the king of France.
- Britain claims New Zealand as a colony. Many of the native islanders, the Maori, object to the terms of the Treaty of Waitangi.
- José Francia, dictator of Paraguay, dies.
- William II ascends the throne of the Netherlands after the abdication of his father, William I.
- Afghan forces surrender to the British Army, ending the Afghan war.

1896 (YEAR OF THE OPERA'S PREMIERE)

HISTORY AND POLITICS

- Czar Nicholas II visits Paris and London.
- Utah becomes the 45th state of the Union.
- William McKinley is elected the 25th president of the United States.
- Britain and France sign an agreement on their respective spheres of influence in southeast Asia. Both countries guarantee the independence of Siam (Thailand) and the French protectorate over Laos is recognized.
- A Christian rebellion against Ottoman rule breaks out on the island of Crete.
- The Italians are decisively defeated by the Ethiopians under Menelik at the battle of Adowa. Italy sues for peace and withdraws its protectorate.
- The Chinese diplomat Li Hongzhang leaves Shanghai on a goodwill tour of Russia Germany, France, Britain and the United States.
- In Johannesburg, an attempt to overthrow the Transvaal regime of Paul Kruger, the Boer Leader, is crushed by a force of Boer commandos.
- A military alliance is made between Transvaal and the Orange Free State.
- France and Italy sign a convention by which Italy recognizes the French protectorate over Tunisia and the status of Italian residents in Tunis is resolved.
- Russia and China sign the Manchuria Convention.
- Great Britain establishes a protectorate over Sierra Leone, naming it a crown colony within its present boundaries, following an Anglo-French territorial agreement to settle disputed territory in West Africa.
- Kumasi, the inland capital of the Ashanti Kingdom (in present Ghana), was conquered by an expeditionary force sent by William Maxwell, the British governor of the Gold Coast. On August 16 the region was made a British protectorate to prevent French or German claims to the area.
- Madagascar is proclaimed a French colony.
- The United States Supreme Court handed down a decision in the case of *Plessy vs. Ferguson* that separate public facilities for different races were constitutional.

LITERATURE

- The first episodes from a new novel, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, by the popular novelist Charles Dickens, appear.
- James Fenimore Cooper's *The Pathfinder* becomes a bestseller.
- Alphonse Daudet, French novelist, is born.
- Thomas Hardy, English novelist and poet, is born.
- Alessandro Manzoni publishes republishes his romantic novel *I promessi sposi* (The Betrothed) in a revised form in the Tuscan dialect.
- Prosper Mérimée (author of *Carmen*) writes the Corsican short story *Colomba*.
- Giovanni Verga, Italian novelist, is born.
- Émile Zola, French novelist, is born.

VISUAL ARTS

- Sir Charles Barry begins the building of the Houses of Parliament in London (completed 1860).
- Nelson's Column is erected in London's Trafalgar Square.
- Eugène Delacroix, French romantic painter, exhibits *Entry of the Crusaders into Constantinople* at the Louvre in Paris.
- Caspar David Friedrich, German romantic painter, dies.
- Claude Monet and Pierre Auguste Renoir, French impressionist painters, are born.
- Auguste Rodin, French sculptor, is born.

MUSIC

- Niccolò Paganini, composer and master of the violin, dies.
- Gaetano Donizetti premieres three operas in Paris: *La fille du régiment*, *Les martyrs* and *La favorite*.
- Giovanni Pacini premieres his most popular opera, *Saffo*, at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples.
- Giuseppe Verdi premieres his second opera, *Un giorno di regno, ossia Il finto Stanislao*, at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan. It is a resounding failure.
- French instrument maker Alexandre François Debain construct the first harmonium (*orgue expressif*), patented in 1842.
- Robert Schumann marries Clara Wieck.
- Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky, Russian composer, is born.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

- The essayist Alexis de Tocqueville publishes *Democracy in America*, a work of penetrating analysis that brings him almost instant fame.

under the Fourteenth Amendment if they were "separate but equal." Thus, local Jim Crow laws, enacted by various southern states to circumvent the Civil Rights Act of 1875, were encouraged.

- José Rizal, the national hero of the Filipinos, was executed by Spain for fomenting revolt. Though Rizal did not take part in the insurrection begun by the Young Philippines on August 26, he was tried and convicted of being implicated. The uprising came to an end with promises of concessions by Spain in return for the departure of their revolutionary leader.
- Wilfrid Laurier becomes the first French Canadian prime minister of Canada. During his term he promoted favorable relations with the United States and Great Britain, promoted immigration, and stressed the internal development of Canada, especially in the western provinces. He supported the union of all Canadian people and paved the way for Canada's later independence within the British Commonwealth of Nations.
- An earthquake and accompanying tsunami, caused by disturbances at the sea bottom near Sanriku on Honshu island, kills 27,000 people.
- In Rhodesia, a Matabele revolt is put down by Baden-Powell.

LITERATURE

- Paul Verlaine, Symbolist poet, dies.
- Harriet Beecher Stowe, American novelist, dies.
- William Morris, English poet and artist, dies.
- Pierre Louys, French novelist, writes *Aphrodite*.
- Anton Chekhov, Russian dramatist, writes *The Sea Gull*.
- *The Red Badge of Courage*, a second novel by Stephen Crane, about the Civil War, is published.
- In Spain the novelist Vicente Blasco Ibanez publishes *Tierras Malditas*.

VISUAL ARTS

- In London, the National Portrait Gallery moves from Bethnal Green to Westminster.
- John E. Millais, English painter, dies.
- Odilon Redon, French symbolist painter, publishes his lithograph *Beatrice* in *L'Album d'estampes originales de la Galerie Vollard*.
- Pierre Bonnard, French artist, paints *The Bridge at Chatou*.
- Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, French artist, begins a series of lithographs entitled *Elles* depicting life in the Parisian brothels.
- Paul Cézanne, French post-impressionist, paints *Bathers*.
- Paul Signac, French pointillist, paints *View of Saint Tropez*.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- In Prussia the Army adopts the artillery shell developed in 1836/7 by the gunsmith Nicholas Dreyse which combines the fuse, charge and projectile states.
- The Anglo-Canadian shipowner Samuel Cunard founds the first regular steamship line from Liverpool to Boston and New York.
- The Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, the first dental college in the country, is founded.
- The chemist Justus von Liebig publishes *Organic Chemistry Applied to Agriculture and Physiology*, one of the earliest works of agricultural chemistry.
- German Physician Karl A. von Basedow describes exophthalmic toxic goiters (Basedow's or Graves' disease).

DAILY LIFE

- In Britain Sir Rowland Hill's proposals for a system of penny postage are implemented despite bureaucratic opposition. Senders may purchase an adhesive tag bearing the queen's head (a "stamp"), which is attached to the envelope.
- A census shows that the population of the United States has grown by a third over the last decade to just over 17 million people.
- The S. S. Britannia is awarded the Blue Riband for the fastest crossing of the Atlantic.
- Botanical Gardens at Kew, London open.
- Transportation of criminals from England to New South Wales comes to an end.
- The game of ninepins reaches its peak of favor in America.
- 2,816 miles of railroad are in operation in the United States; 1,331 miles in England.
- Legislation is enacted by the United States Government establishing a maximum 10-hour work day for all federal employees.
- The first public arboretum is opened in Derby. It reflects the Victorian enthusiasm for the study of horticulture and the natural sciences.

MUSIC

- Anton Bruckner, composer, dies.
- Clara Wieck-Schumann, German pianist, dies.
- Richard Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, a symphonic poem, is premiered in Frankfurt.
- Umberto Giordano's opera, *Andrea Chénier*, is premiered in Milan.
- Ruggero Leoncavallo's first opera, *Chatterton*, receives a belated premiere at the Teatro Regio in Turin.
- Jean Sibelius's only opera, *Jungfrun i tornet (The Maiden in the Tower)*, premieres in Helsinki.
- Gilbert and Sullivan's last comic operetta, *The Grand Duke*, is premiered in London.
- Hugo Wolf's opera, *Der Corregidor*, premieres in Mannheim.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

- The Hungarian Jewish writer Theodor Herzl publishes *The Jewish State*, in which he advocates the formation of a Jewish state to solve the Jewish Question.
- Five annual Nobel Prizes are established for those people who, during the preceding year, have conferred the greatest benefits on mankind in the fields of physics, physiology and medicine, chemistry, literature and peace.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- William Ramsay discovers helium.
- Niagara Falls hydroelectric plant opens.
- Henri Becquerel, French physicist, identifies the radioactivity of uranium.
- Otto Lilienthal, one of the great pioneers of aviation, dies in a glider accident in Germany.
- Ernest Rutherford defines the magnetic detection of electrical waves.
- Alfred Nobel dies.

DAILY LIFE

- After a gap of over 1,500 years, the first modern Olympics are held in Athens.
- The first Alpine ski school is founded at Lilienfeld, Austria.
- The Klondike gold rush begins in Bonanza Creek, Canada.
- A new newspaper, *The Daily Mail*, begins publication in Britain.
- Audiences flock to moving picture shows, almost simultaneously invented by Thomas Edison in America and the Auguste and Louis Lumière in France.

In the beginning ...

JACOPO PERI 1561–1633

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI 1567–1643

Although often considered an Italian innovation, OPERA had its debut in Ancient Greece, where drama frequently incorporated singing, declamation and dance to tell a narrative tale. Ecclesiastical music dramas of the Middle Ages were also important precursors. But the operatic art form familiar to us today has its roots in Florence, between 1580 and 1589, where a group of musicians, poets and scholars explored the possibility of reviving tragic drama of the ancients.

The circle was known as the CAMERATA and consisted of writers, theorists and composers, including GIULIO CACCINI, OTTAVIO RINUCCINI and VINCENZO GALILEI (father of the famed astronomer). Their efforts exacted musical compositions that took special care to accentuate the dramatic inflection of their chosen text, to evoke its precise emotional shading and to find the ideal marriage between words and music. JACOPO PERI, a rival of Caccini and a collaborator with Rinuccini, produced the first known (but no longer existing) opera, *Dafne*, in 1597.

The Camerata met at the home of the nobleman GIOVANNI DE' BARDI. Thus, no sooner had opera had made its first appearance than it became a court activity, which fit the social and political conditions of the day. As a result of Bardi's influence, these composers were hired by the Grand Duke of Tuscany Ferdinand I, who gave them their first wide exposure. When his daughter, Marie de' Medici, married Henry IV of France, Peri's *Euridice* was produced at the ceremony, and Italian opera gained its first international premiere. Even though *Euridice* was a simply staged production accompanied by a small group of strings and flute, in 1600 this type of musical drama was considered revolutionary.

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI'S *Orfeo* (1607) is the most significant opera of this period, more so than those works of the Florentines. The boldness of his harmonies and the richness of his orchestration dramatically developed the art form, and this work, along with *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (1642) are still popular pieces performed today.

Opera in Venice

FRANCESCO CAVALLI 1602–1676

ANTONIO CESTI 1623–1669

The new art form quickly spread to other Italian cities. By 1636, the first public opera house was opened in Venice and opera became quite popular among the people. *Le nozze di Teti e di Pele*, the first of FRANCESCO CAVALLI's thirty-plus operas for the Venetian stage, premiered two years later. Competing with Monteverdi and ANTONIO CESTI (who took a post in Innsbruck after producing only two works for Venice), Cavalli quickly rose to the top.

At the same time, Italian stage designers were fast improving their techniques and were able to produce stupendous special effects, a happy coincidence for the new operatic art form. The use of the proscenium arch allowed the spectator to view the stage from a narrower angle, thus producing a better illusion of perspective. The proscenium also hid elaborate flying apparatus, and allowed for quick and seamless scene changes with drops from the top and flaps from the side wings. Spectacular stage effects became a speciality of French opera, and with the inclusion of ballet, became the part of established style of France by the 18th century.



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
1971 production of Monteverdi's
L'incoronazione di Poppea

North of Italy, Hamburg composer REINHARD KEISER (1694 – 1739) became the director of one of the first public opera houses in Germany. He often set libretti by Venetian librettists.

Baroque Opera in France, England and Germany

JEAN-BAPTISTE LULLY 1632–1687
 HENRY PURCELL 1658/59–1695
 GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL 1685–1759
 CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK 1714–1787



*A scene from Minnesota Opera's
 2008 production of Keiser's The Fortunes of King Croesus*

In 1646, Giovanni Battista Lulli arrived in France from Florence and tried to establish Italian opera in the French Court. He was unsuccessful because the reigning monarch, Louis XIV, preferred dance. Nonetheless, JEAN-BAPTISTE LULLY, as he became known, rose in royal favor by composing ballets for the king and eventually gained control of the Académie Royale de Musique, the official musical institution of France. Through Lully's influence in this important position, and by way of his own compositions, a distinctive French operatic form began to emerge and thrive on its own.

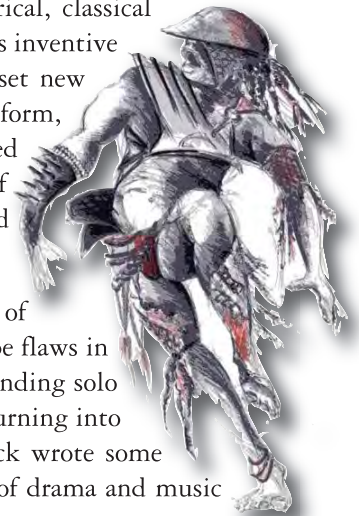
The Italian and French forms of opera were slow to catch on among the English, who preferred spoken theater. A compromise was reached in a form referred to as SEMI-OPERA, featuring spoken dialogue alternated with musical MASQUES (which often included dance). HENRY PURCELL's *The Fairy Queen* (1692) is one popular example from this period.



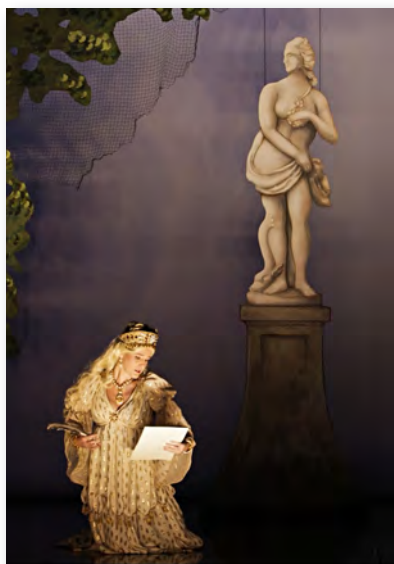
*A scene from The Minnesota Opera's
 1994 production of Handel's Julius Caesar*

Purcell's first opera, *Dido and Aeneas* (1689), is his only opera in the Italian style and continues to be occasionally revived in modern times.

A major player in the early part of the 18th century was GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL, who began his career in Hamburg. As early as 1711, Handel enjoyed success in England and would remain there for the next forty years. During that time, he wrote 35 operas (many in the Italian style), most of which focused on historical, classical or romantic subjects. His inventive musical style began to set new standards for the art form, and his works redefined the dramatic potential of opera as a vital and vivid experience.



Another German, CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK, arrived in England on the heels of Handel's last London operas, and later moving to Vienna, he began to see what he found to be flaws in the conventional Italian opera of the day. Singers had taken control of the productions, demanding solo arias and sometimes adding their own pieces to show off their vocal technique. Operas were turning into a collection of individual showpieces at the sacrifice of dramatic integrity. Although Gluck wrote some operas which shared these flaws, one work, *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762), reasserted the primacy of drama and music



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2009 production of Argento's *Casanova's Homcoming* (which included a scene from Metastasio's opera seria *Demofonte* (1733))

by removing the *DA CAPO* (repeated and embellished) part of the aria, by using chorus and instrumental solos only to reinforce the dramatic action, and by not allowing the singers to insert their own music. Gluck completed his career in Paris, where he became a master of French opera's serious form, the *TRAGÉDIE LYRIQUE*.

During the 18th century, opera began to fall into two distinct categories: *OPERA SERIA* and *OPERA BUFFA*. Opera seria (serious opera) focused on historical, religious or Greco-Roman subjects. The glorification of saints, kings and gods went hand-in-hand with the grandiose baroque style and the spectacular stage effects of court opera. Librettist Pietro Metastasio provided 28 libretti that continued to serve composers again and again well into the 19th century. Opera buffa (comic opera) had its roots with the popular audience, each country specializing in its own distinct form. In France, CHARLES-SIMON FAVART's operas of the 1740s parodied the serious *tragédie lyriques* of Lully (the Opéra-Comique, the Paris theater for comic opera, would later be named after him). In Naples, Italy, the *INTERMEZZI* (short comic works inserted in between acts of a serious opera), of GIOVANNI BATTISTA PERGOLESI paved the way to the development of opera buffa in the latter half of the 18th century. His masterpiece, *La serva padrona* (1733), is considered a milestone in the development of comic opera.

Opera during the Classical Period

GIUSEPPE SARTI 1729–1802

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN 1732–1809

GIOVANNI PAISIELLO 1740–1816

DOMENICO CIMAROSA 1749–1801

ANTONIO SALIERI 1750–1825

VICENTE MARTIN Y SOLER 1754–1806

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART 1756–1791

Two composers are invariably linked to the Classical Period – FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN and WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART. Of the former, few of his operas are produced today even though he wrote over 25, most of which were created and performed for his employer, Prince Nikolaus Esterházy. Mozart's operas, however, remain in repertory as some of the most frequently produced works. Of the five most favorite – *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1782), *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786), *Don Giovanni* (1787), *Così fan tutte* (1790), *The Magic Flute* (1791) – two are *SINGSPIELS* (a popular German form, replacing sung recitative with spoken dialogue), two opera buffas and one opera “semi-seria.” Two opera serias (the form Mozart preferred, incidently) frame his adult career – *Idomeneo* (1781) was his first mature opera and *La clemenza di Tito* (1791) was his last commission.

Lesser composers of this period include ANTONIO SALIERI (born in Legnago, settling later in Vienna), who served the court of Emperor Joseph II. Through the emperor's influence with his sister, Marie Antoinette, Salieri made headway in Paris as well, establishing himself as a worthy successor of Gluck in the serious vein of his *tragédie lyriques*. Returning to Vienna in 1784, Salieri found himself in strict



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1996 production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*



Artist rendering of Minnesota Opera's 2008 production of Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*

competition with other leading composers of the day, GIOVANNI PAISIELLO and VINCENTE MARTÍN Y SOLER. These two composers were known partly from their brief service to Catherine the Great of Russia, along with several other advanced Italian composers including GIUSEPPE SARTI and DOMENICO CIMAROSA.

After the Revolution – French Grand Opera

LUIGI CHERUBINI 1760–1842

FERDINANDO PAER 1771–1839

GASPARE SPONTINI 1774–1851

DANIEL-FRANÇOIS-ESPRIT AUBER 1782–1871

GIACOMO MEYERBEER 1791–1864

In the decades following the French revolution, FRENCH GRAND OPERA developed extensively, moving from a private entertainment for royalty to an art form eagerly consumed by the upwardly mobile bourgeoisie. Opera in France at the turn of the 19th century was dominated by expatriate Italian composers. First and most notable was LUIGI CHERUBINI, who established residence in Paris in 1785. Eventually rising to the position of director of the national conservatory, he virtually ceased composing operas in 1813. The most lasting work in his oeuvre is *Médée* of 1797.

FERDINANDO PAER came to prominence during the first empire of Napoleon I – he was engaged as the Emperor's *maître de chapelle* in 1807 and later became the director of the Opéra-Comique. Just before Napoleon's abdication, Paer assumed directorship of the Théâtre Italien, a post he held until it was yielded to Rossini in 1824. None of his many operas survive in the modern repertory, although the libretto he wrote for one, *Leonora* (1804), served to inspire Ludwig van Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio* (1805). GASPARE SPONTINI was another Italian who moved to Paris and eventually



Today's Opéra National de Paris
at the Place de la Bastille (completed in 1989)



Paris Opéra – Palais Garnier (completed in 1875; still in use)
The old Opéra on the Salle de la Peteliér, birthplace of
French Grand Opera, burned down in 1873

ran the Théâtre Italien, a theater devoted to producing Italian works in their native language. Most popular among his repertoire were *La Vestale* (1807) and *Fernand Cortez* (1809).

French grand opera came into its own through the efforts of two composers: DANIEL-FRANÇOIS-ESPRIT AUBER and GIACOMO MEYERBEER. Collaborating with Eugène Scribe (whose plays would later serve as inspiration for a number of Verdi operas), Auber produced *La muette de Portici* (1828), the first definite *grand opéra* of this period, which proved extremely popular with French audiences. Characteristic of the genre was a five-act framework that incorporated spectacular stage effects, large crowd scenes and a ballet. A specific, mannered formula for the drama's unfolding was also inherent in the art form.

Meyerbeer brought grand opera to fruition first with *Robert le diable* (1831), then with *Les Huguenots* (1836), and with these works, also established a close relationship with Scribe. Two later works of note include *La prophète* (1849) and *L'Africaine* (1865), also cast in the grand opera schema.

Early 19th-century Italy – The Bel Canto composers

GIOACHINO ROSSINI 1792–1868

GAETANO DONIZETTI 1797–1848

VINCENZO BELLINI 1801–1835

Back in Italy, opera saw the development of a distinctive style known as BEL CANTO. Bel canto (literally “beautiful singing”) was characterized by the smooth emission of tone, beauty of timbre and elegance of phrasing. Music associated with this genre contained many TRILLS, ROULADES and other embellishments that showed off the par-



*A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2000 production of Rossini's Semiramide*

Opéra, several of which show tendencies of the French grand opera style. *William Tell* was his last opera – Rossini retired at age 37 with 39 more years to live.

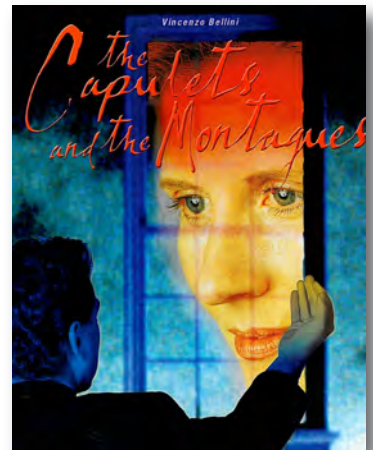
GAETANO DONIZETTI and VINCENZO BELLINI were two other Italian Bel Canto composers who premiered operas in both Paris and Italy. A tendency that began with Rossini and continued into their works was the practice of accompanied recitatives. Opera to this point had been organized in a very specific man-



*Set model for Minnesota Opera's
2010 production of Donizetti's Roberto Devereux*

ner with more elongated “numbers” (arias, duets, ensembles) alternated with recitative (essentially dialogue set to music, intended to move the action along). In Mozart's day, these recitative would be played by a harpsichord or fortepiano (sometimes doubled with cellos and basses) and was known as RECITATIVO SECCO. As Rossini's style progressed, the orchestra took over playing the recitatives which became known as RECITATIVO ACCOMPAGNATO. The practice continued into Verdi's day.

*Promotional material for
Minnesota Opera's
2001 production of Bellini's
The Capulets and the
Montagues*



ticular singer's technique. Traditionally, a bel canto aria begins with a slow, song-like CANTABILE section followed by an intermediate MEZZO section with a slightly quicker tempo. It ends with a dazzling CABALETTA, the fastest section, where the singer shows off his or her talents. Often these were improvised upon, or replaced with “suitcase” arias of the singers' own choosing, much to the consternation of the composer.

GIOACHINO ROSSINI was the first and perhaps best known of the three composers associated with this style. In his early years, between 1813 and 1820, Rossini composed rapidly, producing two or three operas a year. The pace slowed after he moved to France in 1824 – there he produced five works for the Paris



*A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2004 production of Donizetti's Lucrezia Borgia*

Three Masters of Opera

GIUSEPPE VERDI 1813–1901

RICHARD WAGNER 1813–1883

GIACOMO PUCCINI 1858–1924

GIUSEPPE VERDI's roots began in bel canto but the composer transformed the Italian style into a more fluid, less structured form. With a legacy of 26 operas, Verdi is never out of the repertory and four of these (*Rigoletto*, 1851; *Il trovatore*, 1853; *La traviata*, 1853; *Aida*, 1871) are some of the most familiar of the art form.

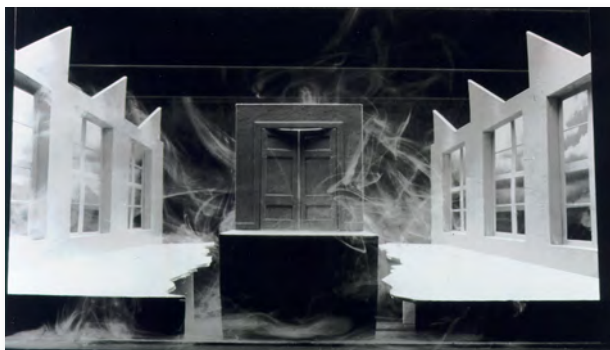
Verdi's contemporary, RICHARD WAGNER, is also considered one of the greats. Taking the idea of "fluidity" one step further, Wagner developed his operas into freely flowing MUSIC-DRAMAS united by melodic motifs that become associated with persons, places and things. Taking the grandeur of French opera one step further, he crafted his own libretti out of Nordic legends and created spectacular operatic moments. Wagner also greatly expanded the orchestra and developed his own particular brass instruments for greater impact. A Wagnerian singer

is one with great stamina – they must sing over a large orchestra in an opera that can be up to four hours long.

Italian opera's successor to Verdi turned out to be GIACOMO PUCCINI. With a gift of popular melody and musical economy, his operas *La bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900) and *Madame Butterfly* (1904) remain at the top of the standard repertory.



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1998 production of Verdi's Aida



Set model for Minnesota Opera's 1992 production of Wagner's The Flying Dutchman



Costume sketch for Minnesota Opera's 1994 production of Verdi's Il trovatore



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2004 production of Puccini's Madame Butterfly



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2002 production of Verdi's Don Carlos

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Later French Opera

HECTOR BERLIOZ 1803–1869

CHARLES-FRANÇOIS GOUNOD 1818–1893

JACQUES OFFENBACH 1819–1880

EDOUARD LALO 1823–1892

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS 1835–1921

LÉO DELIBES 1836–1891

GEORGES BIZET 1838–1875

JULES MASSENET 1842–1912

GUSTAVE CHARPENTIER 1860–1956

The grand opera schema continued into the latter half of the 19th century in such works as HECTOR BERLIOZ's *Les Troyens* (composed 1856–58), and CHARLES-FRANÇOIS GOUNOD's *Faust* (1859) and *Roméo et Juliette* (1867). An element of realism began to slip into the French repertoire, seen in works by GEORGES BIZET (*Carmen*, 1875) and GUSTAVE CHARPENTIER (*Louise*, 1897). JACQUES OFFENBACH revolutionized the art of comic operetta in such works as *Orphée aux enfers* (1858), *La belle Hélène* (1864) and *La Périochole* (1868). Other composers of this period include CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (*Samson et Dalila*, 1877), EDOUARD LALO (*Le Roi d'Ys*, 1875) and JULES MASSENET (*Manon*, 1884; *Werther*, 1892; *Cendrillon*, 1899).



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2009 production of Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles*



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2009 production of Gounod's *Faust*



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2008 production of Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*

Verismo in Late 19th-century Italy

RUGGERO LEONCAVALLO 1857–1919

PIETRO MASCAGNI 1863–1945

UMBERTO GIORDANO 1867–1948

A realist vein began to penetrate Italian opera toward the end of the 19th century, influenced in part by naturalism in French literature of the period and by the writings of an Italian literary circle, the *SCAPIGLIATURA*. Translated as the “dishevelled ones,” the Scapigliatura displayed their distaste for bourgeois society in works of gritty realism, often bordering on the morbid and the macabre. Nearly all the members of the group (lead by GIOVANNI VERGA) led tragic lives ending in early death by alcoholism and suicide.

Operas to come out of the resulting VERISMO school include PIETRO MASCAGNI's *Cavalleria rusticana* (1890), RUGGERO LEONCAVALLO's *Pagliacci* (1892) and UMBERTO GIORDANO's *Mala vita* (1892). Other works are attributed to this movement by nature of their rapid action with passionate tension and violence quickly alternating with moments of great sentimentality.

Opera in Russia

MIKHAIL IVANOVICH GLINKA 1804–1857

PYOTR IL'YICH TCHAIKOVSKY 1840–1893

NIKOLAY ANDREYEVICH RIMSKY-KORSAKOV 1844–1908

MODEST PETROVICH MUSORGSKY 1839–1881

SERGEI PROKOFIEV 1891–1953

DMITRI SHOSTOKOVICH 1906–1975

Opera was introduced in Russia during the succession of powerful czarinas that culminated in the reign of Catherine the Great (ruled 1762 – 1796). She employed a number of important Italian composers (see above) and established St. Petersburg as a major city for the production of new opera, later to be elevated to the same par as London, Paris and



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1978 production of Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges*

Vienna by her descendent, Nicholas I (ruled 1825 – 1855). Of native Russian composers, the first to come to prominence was MIKHAIL GLINKA with *A Life for the Tsar* (1836), and later, *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1842). PYOTR TCHAIKOVSKY, now known more for his ballets and symphonies, was a prolific composer of opera. His best works include *Eugene Onegin* (1879), *Mazepa* (1884) and *The Queen of Spades* (1890). Other Russian composers of the latter 19th century include NIKOLAY RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (*The Snow Maiden*, 1882; *The Tsar's Bride*, 1899; *The Golden Cockerel*, 1909) and MODEST MUSORGSKY (*Boris Godunov*, 1874).

Russian opera continued into the 20th century with works by SERGEI PROKOFIEV composed *The Love for Three Oranges* (1921) and *The Gambler* (1929), among others. His crowning achievement, written toward the end of his life, was *War and Peace* (1948), based on the novel by Leo Tolstoy. DMITRI SHOSTOKOVICH's most notable work is *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (1934). Both artists suffered censure from the Soviet government.

Into the 20th Century

CLAUDE DEBUSSY 1862–1918

RICHARD STRAUSS 1864–1949

PAUL DUKAS 1865–1935

ARNOLD SCHOENBERG 1874–1951

IGOR STRAVINSKY 1882–1971

ALBAN BERG 1885–1935

DARIUS MILHAUD 1892–1974

PAUL HINDEMITH 1895–1963

KURT WEILL 1900–1950

BENJAMIN BRITTEN 1913–1976



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2001 production of Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1996 production of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*

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A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2010 production of Strauss' *Salome*

all twelve notes of the chromatic scale. This “row” can be played in transposition, in reverse, upside-down, or in any combination of the three. Schoenberg also evolved a particular style of singing, *SPRECHSTIMME*, an intoned speech halfway between singing and speaking.

Sprechstimme was well suited to the expressionist nature of operas being produced at this time. Schoenberg's student, ALBAN BERG, employed it in *Wozzeck* (1925) and used the serialized twelve-tone method in his opera *Lulu* (1937). Another avant-garde composer, PAUL HINDEMITH, created a series of expressionist one-act operas that shocked audiences of the day: *Murder, Hope of Women* (1921), *Das Nusch-Nuschi* (1921) and *Sancta Susanna* (1922). Two later operas include one based on a short story by E.T.A. Hoffmann (*Cardillac*, 1926) and a satire on modern social behavior (*News of the Day*, 1929). At about the same KURT WEILL was causing an uproar with his new works: *The Threepenny Opera* (1928), *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (1930) and *Der Silbersee* (1933). The up-and-coming Nazi party did not favor his works, and he was forced to leave the country, eventually to settle in America.

In Paris, Russian IGOR STRAVINSKY was shocking audiences and causing riots with his ballet music. His early operas include *The Nightingale* (1914) and *Mavra* (1922). *Oedipus Rex* (1927) is representative of his first neoclassical works, using forms from the 18th century with modern tonality and orchestration. His later (and longest) opera, *The Rake's Progress* (1951), is a culmination of this neoclassical style. French composer DARIUS MILHAUD was extremely prolific in all genres of music. In opera, he produced the one-act *Le pauvre matelot* (1927) and a large-scale work in the tradition of grand opera, *Christophe Columbe* (1930). Later in his life he composed *La mère coupable* (1966), based on the Beaumarchais Figaro trilogy (which includes *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*).

In England, BENJAMIN BRITTEN emerged as one of Britain's foremost composers of opera since Henry Purcell. Out of his 16 original works for the stage the most popular include *Peter Grimes* (1945), *Billy Budd* (1951), *Gloriana* (1953) and *The Turn of the Screw* (1954).

CLAUDE DEBUSSY's impressionist score for *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902) paved the way for the radical changes in 20th-century opera. Also based on a Symbolist text by Maurice Maeterlinck was PAUL DUKAS' *Ariane et Barbe-Blene* (1907), an opera about the notorious Bluebeard and his six wives. But causing the most sensation was RICHARD STRAUSS' *Salome* (1905), which pushed both tonality and the demands on the singers to the limits. He followed that opera with an even more progressive work, *Elektra* (1909), drawn from the Greek tragedy by Sophocles.

Important innovations were taking place in Vienna. ARNOLD SCHOENBERG made a complete break with tonality in his staged MONODRAMA *Erwartung* (1909), giving all twelve tones of the chromatic scale equal importance. He codified this approach in his TWELVE-TONE SYSTEM where a theme is created with a row of notes using



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
1999 production of Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*

20th- and 21st-century American Composers of Opera

VIRGIL THOMSON 1896–1989
GEORGE ANTHEIL 1900–1959
SAMUEL BARBER 1910–1981
GIAN CARLO MENOTTI 1911–2007
CARLISLE FLOYD 1926–
DOMINICK ARGENTO 1927–
CONRAD SUSA 1935–
PHILIP GLASS 1937–
JOHN CORIGLIANO 1938–
JOHN ADAMS 1947–

Paris in the 20s served to inspire the next generation of composers, several of which were expatriates from America. GEORGE ANTHEIL was the first American composer to have an opera premiered in Europe – his work, *Transatlantic*, was written in France but premiered in Frankfurt in 1930. Compatriot VIRGIL THOMSON studied with famed teacher Nadia Boulanger and later produced *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1934) and *The Mother of Us All* (1947), both to texts by Gertrude Stein. SAMUEL BARBER stayed on American soil, studying at the newly founded Curtis Institute in 1935. He went on to compose *Vanessa* (1958), and to open the new Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center, *Antony and Cleopatra* (1966).

On *Vanessa*, Barber collaborated with another composer, GIAN CARLO MENOTTI, who wrote the libretto. Also the author of 25 libretti for his own operas, Menotti is best known for *The Medium* (1946), *The Consul* (1950), *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (1951) and *The Saint of Bleeker Street* (1954). Another American composing at about the same time was CARLISLE

FLOYD, who favored American themes and literature. His most important works include *Susannah* (1955), *Wuthering Heights* (1958), *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* (1962) and *Of Mice and Men* (1970).

During the sixties and seventies, THE MINNESOTA OPERA was the site of many world premieres of lasting significance: CONRAD SUSA's *Transformations* (1973) and *Black River* (1975), and DOMINICK ARGENTO's *The Masque of Angels* (1964), *Postcard from Morocco* (1971), *The Voyage of Edgar Allen Poe* (1976), *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night* (1981) and *Casanova's Homecoming* (1985; revived in 2009). Other Argento works of merit include *Miss Havisham's Fire* (1979) and *The Aspern Papers* (1988).



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
1989 production of Glass' *The Juniper Tree*

Other composers currently at the fore include PHILIP GLASS, JOHN CORIGLIANO and JOHN ADAMS. The Minimalist music of Philip Glass has won popular acclaim among even non-opera-going audiences – his oeuvre includes *Einstein on the Beach* (1976), *Abknaten* (1984), and most recently, *The Voyage* (1992), commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America. The Met also commissioned *The Ghosts of Versailles* from JOHN CORIGLIANO in 1991 – like Milhaud's opera of 1966, its text involves Beaumarchais' third part of the Figaro trilogy with the playwright himself appearing as the lover of 18th-century Queen of France Marie-



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
1998 American premiere of Antheil's *Transatlantic*



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2005 production of Adams' *Nixon in China*

as POUL RUDERS' *The Handmaid's Tale* (Royal Danish Opera; 2000), BRIGHT SHENG'S *Madame Mao* (Santa Fe Opera; 2003), DANIEL CATÁN'S *Salsipuedes* (Houston Grand Opera; 2004), RICHARD DANIELPOUR'S *Margaret Garner* (Michigan Opera Theatre; 2005), RICKY IAN GORDON'S *The Grapes of Wrath* (Minnesota Opera; 2007), JONATHAN DOVE'S *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Opera North, Leeds; 2008), HOWARD SHORE'S *The Fly* (Los Angeles Opera; 2009), JAKE HEGGIE'S *Moby Dick* (Dallas Opera; 2010), KEVIN PUTS' *Silent Night* (Minnesota Opera; 2011) and DOUGLAS J. CUOMO and JOHN PATRICK SHANLEY'S *Doubt* (Minnesota Opera; 2013).



A scene from Minnesota Opera's Pulitzer Prize-winning
2011 world premiere of Puts' *Silent Night*

Costume sketch for Minnesota Opera's
2009 American premiere of Dove's *The Adventures of Pinocchio*

Minnesota
OPERA

Antoinette. JOHN ADAMS' focus on contemporary events lead him to compose *Nixon in China* (1987) and *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991).

Opera continues to be a living and vital art form in the revival of many of these works as well as the commissioning of new pieces. Among world premieres in the last two decades include TOBIAS PICKER'S *Emmeline* (1996) by Santa Fe Opera, DANIEL CATÁN'S *Florencia en el Amazonas* (1996) by Houston Grand Opera, MYRON FINK'S *The Conquistador* (1997) presented by San Diego Opera, ANTHONY DAVIS' *Amistad* (1997) presented by Lyric Opera of Chicago and *Central Park* (1999) by Glimmerglass Opera, a trilogy of short operas set by three composers. Recent seasons included

s u c h
n e w
w o r k s



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2003 American premiere of Ruders'
The Handmaid's Tale



Minnesota Opera combines a culture of creativity and fiscal responsibility to produce opera and opera education programs that expand the art form, nurture artists, enrich audiences and contribute to the vitality of the community.

Minnesota Opera's roots were planted in 1963 when the Walker Art Center commissioned Dominick Argento to compose an opera (*The Masque of Angels*) for its performing arts program, Center Opera. Center Opera focused on the composition and performance of new works by American composers, and, under the influence of the Walker Art Center, emphasized visual design. The company grew steadily, and in 1969 became an independent entity, changing its name in 1971 to The Minnesota Opera.

Throughout the first 12 years of its history, The Minnesota Opera was known as a progressive, "alternative" opera production company, a complement to the traditional orientation of the annual Metropolitan Opera tour and the productions of the St. Paul Opera. In 1976, The Minnesota Opera merged with the St. Paul Opera, adding a focus on traditional repertory to its program of contemporary opera.



Set design for Minnesota Opera's
1971 production of Dominick Argento's
Postcard from Morocco

In January 1985, The Minnesota Opera entered a new era with the opening of the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts in St. Paul, one of the nation's most respected performance halls. Today, the company presents its entire season at the Ordway.

In September 1990, the company moved its scenic and costume shops, rehearsal facilities and administrative offices to the 51,000 square-foot Minnesota Opera Center, which comprises three renovated warehouses on the Mississippi riverfront in Minneapolis. Winner of a 1990 Preservation Alliance of Minnesota Award, the Minnesota Opera Center is one of the finest opera production facilities in the nation and has served to strengthen the company both artistically and institutionally.

Throughout the 1990s, the company gained a national reputation for its high-quality, innovative productions of standard repertoire operas like *Aida*, *Carmen* and *Turandot*, which were seen on stages across the nation, and firmly established Minnesota Opera's reputation as a lead coproducer in the industry. In that decade, Minnesota Opera also grew institutionally, launching an artistic development campaign to establish a foundation for the expansion of its season and increased artistic quality.

In 1997, the company launched its Resident Artist Program to bridge the gap between an artist's academic training and their professional life on the world stage. The RAP is acclaimed for its exceptional, intense and individualized training as well as the elite group of young artists it produces. Alumni have earned engagements at prestigious houses such as the Metropolitan Opera, the Salzburg Festival and Covent Garden.

In 2000, Artistic Director Dale Johnson articulated a new artistic vision for the company inspired by bel canto ("beautiful singing"), the ideal upon which Italian opera is based. Bel canto values, which emphasize intense emotional expression supported by exquisite technique, inform every aspect of the company's programs, from repertoire selection, casting and visual design to education and artist training. As one manifestation of its philosophy, Minnesota Opera is committed to producing one work from the early 19th-century Bel Canto period each season, attracting luminary singers like Bruce Ford, Vivica Genaux, Brenda Harris and Sumi Jo to its stage.



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1984 production of
Peter Schickele's *The Abduction of Figaro*



Minnesota Opera is also recognized for its progressive and far-reaching educational programs. Residencies in schools, opera education classes and pre-performance discussions are building an audience for tomorrow and enhancing the enjoyment of audiences today.

Throughout its history, Minnesota Opera has attracted international attention for its performances of new operas and innovative productions of masterworks. Among its most renowned world and American premieres are: Dominick Argento's *Postcard from Morocco*, *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe* and *Casanova's Homecoming*, William Mayer's *A Death in the Family*, Libby Larsen's *Frankenstein*, *The Modern Prometheus*, Oliver Knussen and Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, Conrad Susa's *Transformations* and *Black River*, PDQ Bach's *The Abduction of Figaro*, Robert Moran's *From the Towers of the Moon*, Gioachino Rossini's *Armida*, Evan Chen's *Bok Choy Variations*, George Antheil's *Transatlantic*, Poul Ruders' *The Handmaid's Tale*, Laurent Petitgirard's *Joseph Merrick dit Elephant Man*, Saverio Mercadante's *Orazi e Curiazi*, Ricky Ian Gordon's *The Grapes of Wrath*, Reinhard Keiser's *The Fortunes of King Croesus*, Jonathan Dove's *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, Kevin Puts' Pulitzer Prize-winning *Silent Night* and Douglas J. Cuomo's *Doubt*.



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2000 production of
Gioachino Rossini's *Semiramide*

Building on the legacy of its commitment to new work and following the overwhelming success of its commission of *The Grapes of Wrath* in 2007, Minnesota Opera launched the New Works Initiative, a landmark program designed to invigorate the operatic repertoire through the production and dissemination of new commissions and revivals of contemporary American works. The seven-year, \$7 million program includes an international coproduction (*The Adventures of Pinocchio*, 2009), three revivals (*Casanova's Homecoming* in 2010; *Wuthering Heights* in 2011 and *The Dream of Valentino* in 2013) and three commissions (*Silent Night* in 2011; *Doubt* in 2013 and *The Manchurian Candidate* in 2015).

On the Minnesota Opera stage, talented national and internationally known artists are brought together to create productions of the highest artistic integrity, emphasizing the balance and total integration of theatrical and musical values. Throughout the past five decades, the company has presented such artists as Tim Albery, Isabel Bayrakdarian, John Lee Beatty, Harry Bicket, Richard Bonyng, William Burden, John Conklin, Roxana Constantinescu, David Daniels, Bruce Ford, Elizabeth Futral, Vivica Genaux, Colin Graham, Denyce Graves, Greer Grimsley, Nancy Gustafson, Brenda Harris, Jason Howard, Judith Howarth, Robert Indiana, Robert Israel, Sumi Jo, Kelly Kaduce, Antony McDonald, Catherine Malfitano, Daniel Massey, Johanna Meier, Suzanne Mentzer, Erie Mills, Sherrill Milnes, Julia Migenes, Fernando de la Mora, James Morris, Suzanne Murphy, Maureen O'Flynn, Susanna Phillips, Ashley Putnam, Patricia Racette, James Robinson, Neil Rosenshein, William Shimell, James Valenti, David Walker and Keith Warner.



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2001 production of Carl Orff's *Carmina burana*

Minnesota Opera, now the 13th largest opera company in the nation with an annual budget of \$10.2 million (Fiscal Year 2012), is guided by President and General Director Kevin Ramch and Artistic Director Dale Johnson.

Today Minnesota Opera is enjoying unprecedented stability and unity of mission, working toward its vision to create a new, dynamic opera company model based upon innovation, world-class artistic quality and strong community service.

MINNESOTA OPERA REPERTOIRE – 1963–2014

- 2013–2014**
Manon Lescaut (Puccini)
Arabella (Strauss)
Macbeth (Verdi)
The Dream of Valentino (Argento)
Die Zauberflöte (Mozart)
- 2012–2013**
50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON
Nabucco (Verdi)
Anna Bolena (Donizetti)
§ † *Doubt* (Cuomo)
Hamlet (Thomas)
Turandot (Puccini)
- 2011–2012**
Così fan tutte (Mozart)
§ † *Silent Night* (Puts)
Werther (Massenet)
Lucia di Lammermoor (Donizetti)
Madame Butterfly (Puccini)
- 2010–2011**
Orfeo ed Euridice (Gluck)
La Cenerentola (Rossini)
Maria Stuarda (Donizetti)
La traviata (Verdi)
Wuthering Heights (Herrmann)
- 2009–2010**
Les pêcheurs de perles (Bizet)
Casanova's Homecoming (Argento)
Roberto Devereux (Donizetti)
La bohème (Puccini)
Salome (R. Strauss)
- 2008–2009**
Il trovatore (Verdi)
Die Entführung aus dem Serail (Mozart)
Faust (Gounod)
* *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Dove)
Il barbiere di Siviglia (Rossini)
- 2007–2008**
Un ballo in maschera (Verdi)
L'italiana in Algeri (Rossini)
Roméo et Juliette (Gounod)
* *Croesus* (Keiser)
Rusalka (Dvořák)
- 2006–2007**
La donna del lago (Rossini)
Les contes d'Hoffmann (Offenbach)
§ † *The Grapes of Wrath* (Gordon)
Lakmé (Delibes)
Le nozze di Figaro (Mozart)
- 2005–2006**
Tosca (Puccini)
Don Giovanni (Mozart)
* *Orazi e Curiazi* (Mercadante)
* *Joseph Merrick dit Elephant Man* (Petitgirard)
- 2004–2005**
Madama Butterfly (Puccini)
Maria Padilla (Donizetti)
Carmen (Bizet)
Nixon in China (Adams)
- 2003–2004**
Rigoletto (Verdi)
Lucrezia Borgia (Donizetti)
Passion (Sondheim)
Die Zauberflöte (Mozart)
- 2002–2003**
Die lustige Witwe (Lehár)
Norma (Bellini)
Der fliegende Holländer (Wagner)
La traviata (Verdi)
* *The Handmaid's Tale* (Ruders)
- 2001–2002**
Lucia di Lammermoor (Donizetti)
La clemenza di Tito (Mozart)
La bohème (Puccini)
Little Women (Adamo)
Don Carlos (Verdi)
- 2000–2001**
Turandot (Puccini)
I Capuleti ed i Montecchi (Bellini)
Street Scene (Weill)
Il barbiere di Siviglia (Rossini)
Pagliacci/Carmine burana (Leoncavallo/Orff)
♣ *The Barber of Seville* (Rossini)
- 1999–2000**
Der Rosenkavalier (R. Strauss)
Macbeth (Verdi)
Semiramide (Rossini)
Le nozze di Figaro (Mozart)
♣ *The Marriage of Figaro* (Mozart)
- 1998–1999**
Otello (Verdi)
Madama Butterfly (Puccini)
The Turn of the Screw (Britten)
Faust (Gounod)
♣ *Madame Butterfly* (Puccini)
- 1997–1998**
Aida (Verdi)
La Cenerentola (Rossini)
* *Transatlantic* (Antheil)
Tosca (Puccini)
♣ *Cinderella* (Rossini, Massenet)
- 1996–1997**
La traviata (Verdi)
Die Zauberflöte (Mozart)
The Rake's Progress (Stravinsky)
Carmen (Bizet)
♣ *Carmen* (Bizet)
- 1995–1996**
La bohème (Puccini)
Don Giovanni (Mozart)
Pelléas et Mélisande (Debussy)
Les contes d'Hoffmann (Offenbach)
♣ *The Bohemians* (Puccini)
- 1994–1995**
Turandot (Puccini)
Il barbiere di Siviglia (Rossini)
Rigoletto (Verdi)
§ † *Bok Choy Variations* (Chen and Simonson)
♣ *Figaro's Revenge* (Rossini, Paisiello)

- § World Premiere
* American Premiere
† Commissioned by The Minnesota Opera
or by The Minnesota Opera Midwest Tour
▲ Tour production
♣ Outreach/Education tour
• New Music-Theater Ensemble production

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1993–1994
Julius Caesar (Handel)
 * *Diary of an African American* (Peterson)
Il trovatore (Verdi)
 § *The Merry Widow and The Hollywood Tycoon* (Lehár)
 ▲ *Don Giovanni* (Mozart)

1992–1993
Der fliegende Holländer (Wagner)
 * *Armida* (Rossini)
Madama Butterfly (Puccini)
The Pirates of Penzance (Gilbert & Sullivan)

1991–1992
Tosca (Puccini)
Les pêcheurs de perles (Bizet)
Le nozze di Figaro (Mozart)
 § † *From the Towers of the Moon* (Moran & La Chiusa)
 ▲ *The Magic Flute* (Mozart)
Carousel (Rodgers & Hammerstein)

1990–1991
Norma (Bellini)
The Aspern Papers (Argento)
Carmen (Bizet)
Così fan tutte (Mozart)
 ▲ *Così fan tutte* (Mozart)
 ▲ *Swing on a Star* (Winkler)

1989–1990
La bohème (Puccini)
A Midsummer Night's Dream (Britten)
Roméo et Juliette (Gounod)
 § † *Frankenstein, The Modern Prometheus* (Larsen)
My Fair Lady (Lerner & Loewe)
 • § *Snow Leopard* (Harper & Nieboer)
 ▲ *Madame Butterfly* (Puccini)
Where the Wild Things Are (Sendak/Knussen)

1988–1989
Don Giovanni (Mozart)
Salome (R. Strauss)
The Mikado (Gilbert & Sullivan)
The Juniper Tree (Glass & Moran)
Show Boat (Kern & Hammerstein)
 § † • *Without Colors* (Wellman & Shiflett)
 § † • *Red Tide* (Selig & Sherman)
 § † • *Newest Little Opera in the World* (ensemble)
 ▲ *Cinderella* (Rossini)
 ▲ *Tintypes* (Kyte, Marvin, Pearle)

1987–1988
Die Fledermaus (J. Strauss)
Rigoletto (Verdi)
Rusalka (Dvorak)
 • *Cowboy Lips* (Greene & Madsen)
 § † • *Fly Away All* (Hutchinson & Shank)
 • *Book of Days* (Monk)
Oklahoma! (Rodgers & Hammerstein)
 ▲ *Carmen* (Bizet)
 ▲ *Jargonants, Aboy!* (McKeel)

1986–1987
Les pêcheurs de perles (Bizet)
The Postman Always Rings Twice (Paulus)
Ariadne auf Naxos (R. Strauss)
South Pacific (Rodgers & Hammerstein)
 ▲ *Hansel and Gretel* (Humperdinck)
 § † ▲ *Jargonants, Aboy!* (McKeel)

1985–1986
 * *Where the Wild Things Are/Higglety Pigglety Pop!* (Knussen/Sendak)
La traviata (Verdi)
L'elisir d'amore (Donizetti)
The King and I (Rodgers & Hammerstein)
 § † *Opera Tomorrow*
 ▲ *The Fantasticks* (Schmidt)
 ▲ *The Magic Flute* (Mozart)
 § † ▲ *The Music Shop* (Wargo)

1984–1985
 * *Animalen* (Werle)
 § † *Casanova's Homecoming* (Argento)
The Magic Flute (Mozart)
 ▲ *La bohème* (Puccini)
 ▲ *Meanwhile, back at Cinderella's* (Arlan)

1983–1984
Hansel and Gretel (Humperdinck)
Madama Butterfly (Puccini)
La Cenerentola (Rossini)
 § *The Abduction of Figaro* (PDQ Bach)
 ▲ *The Boor* (Argento)
 ▲ *Chanticleer* (Barab)
 ▲ *Don Pasquale* (Donizetti)

1982–1983
Hansel and Gretel (Humperdinck)
Lucia di Lammermoor (Donizetti)
 § *A Death in the Family* (Mayer)
Kiss Me, Kate (Porter)
 ▲ *The Barber of Seville* (Rossini)
 ▲ *The Frog Who Became a Prince* (Barnes)
 ▲ *Zetabet* (Barnes)

1981–1982
Hansel and Gretel (Humperdinck)
The Village Singer (Paulus)
Gianni Schicchi (Puccini)
The Barber of Seville (Rossini)
 § *Feathertop* (Barnes)
 § *The Mask of Evil* (Mollicone)
 ▲ *Hansel and Gretel* (Humperdinck)
 § *Rosina* (Titus)

1980–1981
The Merry Widow (Lehar)
Black River (Susa)
Carmen (Bizet)
A Water Bird Talk (Argento)
 § *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night* (Argento)
 ▲ *The Marriage of Figaro* (Mozart)
 ▲ *The Threepenny Opera* (Weill)

1979–1980
The Abduction from the Seraglio (Mozart)
The Pirates of Penzance (Gilbert & Sullivan)
La bohème (Puccini)
 § † *Rosina* (Titus)
 ▲ *A Christmas Carol* (Sandow)

1978–1979
The Love for Three Oranges (Prokofiev)
 § *The Jealous Cellist* (Stokes)
The Passion According to St. Matthew (J.S. Bach)
La traviata (Verdi)
The Consul (Menotti)
 ▲ *Viva la Mamma* (Donizetti)

1977–1978
 * *Christopher Columbus* (Offenbach)
The Mother of Us All (Thomson)
The Marriage of Figaro (Mozart)
 § *Claudia Legare* (Ward)

1976–1977
The Bartered Bride (Smetana)
The Passion According to St. Matthew (J.S. Bach)
Candide (Bernstein)
Mahagonny (Weill)

1975–1976
 § † *Black River* (Susa)
El Capitan (Sousa)
Così fan tutte (Mozart)
 § † *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe* (Argento)

1974–1975
 § † *Gallimaufry* (Minnesota Opera)
 § *Gulliver* (Blackwood, Kaplan, Lewin)
The Magic Flute (Mozart)
Albert Herring (Britten)

1973–1974
El Capitan (Sousa)
Transformations (Susa)
Don Giovanni (Mozart)
 § † *The Newest Opera in the World* (Minnesota Opera)

1972–1973
The Threepenny Opera (Weill)
Postcard from Morocco (Argento)
The Barber of Seville (Rossini)
 § † *Transformations* (Susa)

1971–1972
 § † *Postcard from Morocco* (Argento)
 § † *The Business of Good Government* (Marshall)
The Good Soldier Schweik (Kurka)
The Marriage of Figaro (Mozart)

1970–1971
 § † *Christmas Mummeries & Good Government* (Marshall)
 § † *Faust Counter Faust* (Gessner)
The Coronation of Poppea (Monteverdi)
The Mother of Us All (Thomson)

1969–1970
 § † *Oedipus and the Sphinx* (Marshall)
 * *Punch and Judy* (Birtwistle)
 * *17 Days and 4 Minutes* (Egk)
 § † *The Wanderer* (Paul and Martha Boesing)

1968–1969
Così fan tutte (Mozart)
 § † *Horspjal* (Stokes)
The Wise Woman and the King (Orff)

1967–1968
The Man in the Moon (Haydn)
A Midsummer Night's Dream (Britten)

1966–1967
The Mother of Us All (Thomson)
The Sorrows of Orpheus (Milhaud)
 * *The Harpies* (Blitzstein)
Socraties (Satie)
Three Minute Operas (Milhaud)

1965–1966
The Abduction from the Seraglio (Mozart)
The Good Soldier Schweik (Kurka)

1964–1965
The Rape of Lucretia (Britten)
The Wise Woman and the King (Orff)

1963–1964
 § † *The Masque of Angels* (Argento)
The Masque of Venus and Adonis (Blow)
Albert Herring (Britten)

- § World Premiere
- * American Premiere
- † Commissioned by The Minnesota Opera or by The Minnesota Opera Midwest Tour
- ▲ Tour production
- Outreach/Education tour
- New Music-Theater Ensemble production

THE STANDARD REPERTORY

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1756–1791
The Abduction from the Seraglio 1782
The Marriage of Figaro 1786
Don Giovanni 1787
Così fan tutte 1790
The Magic Flute 1791

NINETEENTH CENTURY

Ludwig van Beethoven 1770–1827
Fidelio 1805

Gioachino Rossini 1792–1868
The Barber of Seville 1816
La Cenerentola 1817

Gaetano Donizetti 1797–1848
The Elixir of Love 1832
Lucia di Lammermoor 1835
Don Pasquale 1843

Vincenzo Bellini 1801–1835
Norma 1831

Richard Wagner 1813–1883
The Flying Dutchman 1843
Tannhäuser 1845
Lobengrin 1850
Tristan und Isolde 1865
Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg 1868
The Ring Cycle 1876
—*Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, Siegfried and Götterdämmerung*
Parsifal 1882

Giuseppe Verdi 1813–1901
Rigoletto 1851
Il trovatore 1853
La traviata 1853
La forza del destino 1862
Don Carlos 1867
Aida 1871
Otello 1887
Falstaff 1893

Charles-François Gounod 1818–1893
Faust 1859
Roméo et Juliette 1867

NINETEENTH CENTURY (CONTINUED)

Jacques Offenbach 1819–1880
Les contes d'Hoffmann 1881

Georges Bizet 1838–1875
Carmen 1875

Modest Musorgsky 1839–1881
Boris Godunov 1874

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky 1840–1893
Eugene Onegin 1879

Engelbert Humperdinck 1854–1921
Hänsel und Gretel 1893

Ruggero Leoncavallo 1857–1919
Pagliacci 1892

Pietro Mascagni 1863–1945
Cavalleria rusticana 1890

TWENTIETH CENTURY

Giacomo Puccini 1858–1924
Manon Lescaut 1893
La bohème 1896
Tosca 1900
Madama Butterfly 1904
Turandot 1926

Claude Debussy 1862–1918
Pelléas et Mélisande 1902

Richard Strauss 1864–1949
Salome 1905
Elektra 1909
Der Rosenkavalier 1911
Ariadne auf Naxos 1912

Alban Berg 1885–1935
Wozzeck 1925
Lulu 1937

Benjamin Britten 1913–1976
Peter Grimes 1945
Albert Herring 1947
Billy Budd 1951
The Turn of the Screw 1954

THE ELEMENTS OF OPERA

Often called “all the arts in one” opera includes the Aristotelian elements of drama: theme, spectacle, plot, diction, movement and music. A production is truly successful only when these components work together. Many individuals are engaged to accomplish this purpose.

IN THE BEGINNING

A subject is selected by a **COMPOSER**. It may be mythical, biblical, historical, literary or based on current events. A **LIBRETTIST** is employed to adapt the story into poetic verse and the composer then writes the music (or **SCORE**).

THE OPERA COMPANY

An opera company's **ARTISTIC DIRECTOR** agrees to stage the work. In many cases, an opera has already been written and staged many times.

ADMINISTRATION

The company's **MARKETING** department sells tickets and the **DEVELOPMENT** department raises funds through donations to cover the costs of the production. The **FINANCE** department controls costs and balances the production's budget. The **EDUCATION** department prepares the audience for what they are going to see on stage.

CASTING

The opera company's **ARTISTIC DIRECTOR** selects performers from auditions. These performers are divided into **PRINCIPALS**, **COMPRI-MARIOS** (singers in secondary roles), **CHORISTERS**, and players for the **ORCHESTRA**. Often in a production, **SUPERNUMERARIES** are employed (people who act but do not sing). Sometimes the opera has a **BALLET** which requires dancers, or a **BANDA** which requires orchestra members to play on stage.

SETS AND COSTUMES

A design team is assembled consisting of a **STAGE DIRECTOR**, **SET DESIGNER** and **COSTUME DESIGNER**. They agree on a visual concept for the opera and sets and costumes are created.

REHEARSAL

The production goes into **REHEARSAL**. Principals, choristers and the orchestra often rehearse separately until the director begins staging. The **CONDUCTOR** of the orchestra attends staging rehearsals which are accompanied by a **RÉPÉTITEUR**, or rehearsal pianist. The orchestra joins the singers for the first time at the **SITZPROBE**. During **TECH WEEK**, sets and lighting are put into place at the theater. Several **DRESS REHEARSALS** (with the performers in costume and the orchestra in the pit) occur before the first performance of the opera. Sometimes these rehearsals are attended by a select audience.

THE PREMIERE

The first presentation of the opera to the general public is known as the **PREMIERE**. Long before the curtain goes up, preparations are being made.

6:00 PM Continuity

STAGEHANDS (1) set the scenery for the first act of the production.

6:15 PM Makeup calls

PRINCIPALS and **COMPRIMARIOS** (2) begin to arrive at the theater to be put into costume by **DRESSERS**, then are wigged by the **WIGMASTER** (1A) and made up with theatrical makeup.

6:30 PM House opens

Opera patrons are admitted to the **AUDITORIUM** (4) and seated by **USHERS** (5). The **HOUSE MANAGER** (6) oversees the activities in the front of the house, including the ushers and concession sales. The **BOX OFFICE MANAGER** (7) takes care of any last minute ticket purchases. Patrons may remain in the **LOBBY** (8) to attend an informational session of *Opera Insights*, led by the Opera's music staff.

6:45 PM Notes

The **STAGE DIRECTOR** may give last minute instructions to the cast before the performance begins.

7:00 PM Warm-ups

PRINCIPALS and **COMPRIMARIOS** (2) warm-up in their dressing rooms.

7:15 PM Chorus and orchestra warm-ups

The **CHORUS** (10), who have already put on their costumes, warms up with the **CHORUSMASTER**. The **ORCHESTRA** warms up in the **ORCHESTRA PIT** (11).

7:25 PM Places

The **PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER** (12) calls places. Two other **STAGE MANAGERS** (13) are posted stage left and stage right to cue the entrances of the singers and choristers.

7:28 PM Orchestra tune

The principal oboe gives a concert "A" to which the **ORCHESTRA** tunes. The **SURTITLE PROMPTER** (15) cues the preshow titles. The **CONDUCTOR** shakes the **CONCERTMASTER's** hand and mounts the podium.

7:30 PM Curtain

The house lights goes out, and the **FLYMAN** (1A) raises the **CURTAIN** (16). The show begins.

8:25 PM Intermission

The audience returns to the **LOBBY** (8) for refreshments while the **STAGEHANDS** (1) reset the **STAGE** (14) for the next act.

10:15 PM Curtain calls

The performance ends, and the **STAGE DIRECTOR**, **DESIGNERS**, **CONDUCTOR** and **SINGERS** get to take a bow for all their hard work.

STAGEHANDS move scenery and props and handle lighting. **DRESSERS** help the cast into their often elaborate costumes.

PRINCIPALS sing the major roles. **COMPRIMARIOS** sing minor named roles. **CHORISTERS** make up the rest of the singing cast and are prepared by the **CHORUSMASTER**.

The **CONDUCTOR** leads the orchestra. The **STAGE DIRECTOR** instructs the cast where to move onstage. He or she generally stays only for the **PREMIERE**.

The **ORCHESTRA** rehearses several times independently from the singers. The first rehearsal during which singers and orchestra perform together is called a **SITZPROBE**. The **CONCERTMASTER** is the first violin and is responsible for "bowing" the string parts so the performers all move their bows together.

The **PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER** "calls" the show, announcing entrance and lighting cues. Two other **STAGE MANAGERS** assist in getting the cast and chorus on and off the stage. The **SURTITLE PROMPTER** cues the English translations projected above the stage from the control booth.

Emergency Exit Only

Orchestra Shell (Storage Position)

Crew Room

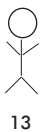
Work Sink

Main Loading Doors
(12'w x 16'h)

1

BACKSTAGE

STAGE (14)



13



1A



CURTAIN (16)

ORCHESTRA PIT (7)



13



12

BACKSTAGE

OFFSTAGE SCENERY

OFFSTAGE SCENERY

Loading Hallway



2



3

To Star Dressing Room



2



3A

WIGS AND MAKEUP

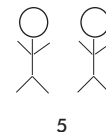
PROP TABLE

To All Dressing Rooms,
Understage Crossover,
Lobby

CHORUS WARM-UP
AND DRESSING
ROOMS (10) →

To Lobby,
Understage
Crossover

Fly Rail (Lock Rail on Deck)



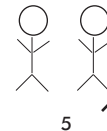
5

BOX OFFICE (7)

CONTROL BOOTH (15)



AUDITORIUM (4)



5



6



LOBBY (8)

THE ELEMENTS OF OPERA – THE SINGERS

The most important part of the opera is the singers. They are categorized into six different voice types.

THE SOPRANO

High-voiced woman. Voted “Most Likely to Die Before the Curtain Goes Down.” Putty in the hands of the TENOR, BARITONE and occasionally even the MEZZO (especially if she is in pants).



THE MEZZO-SOPRANO

Middle- to lower-voiced woman. Nobody's pawn. May hook up with the BARITONE, unless she's playing a young man, in which case she usually gets the SOPRANO.



THE CONTRALTO

Lowest-voiced woman. Usually the mother, maid or duenna (an older woman charged with monitoring the virtue of the impressionable SOPRANO). Generally the CONTRALTO calls herself a MEZZO in order to get more work.

THE TENOR

High-voiced man. Whether comic or tragic, most often the misunderstood romantic role. Often kill themselves; almost always get the girl.



THE BASS AND BARITONE

Middle- to lowest-voiced man. Usually the bad guy, the father or guardian, or the hero's best friend. If he hooks up with another singer, it's usually a MEZZO.



THE FAT LADY

There is no fat lady in helmet and horns—that is a myth. It ain't over till the curtain goes down for the last time and everyone around you is clapping.



CLOCKWISE, LEFT TO RIGHT: ÉLISABETH; EBOLI; GIULIETTA, ROMEO; MIMI, RODOLFO; EDGARDO, ENRICO; LUCIA; HANNA; PHILIPPE, GRAND INQUISITOR; GENEVIÈVE; SERVILIA, ANONIO

Minnesota
OPERA

1 - SOPRANO; 2 - MEZZO; 3 - CONTRALTO;
4 - TENOR; 5 - BARITONE; 6 - BASS

ACOUSTICS	The science of sound; qualities which determine hearing facilities in an auditorium, concert hall, opera house, theater, etc.
ACT	A section of the opera, play, etc. usually followed by an intermission.
AREA LIGHTS	Provide general illumination.
ARIA	(<i>air</i> , English and French; <i>ariette</i> , French). A formal song sung by a single vocalist. It may be in two parts (binary form), or in three parts (see da capo) with the third part almost a repetition of the first. A short aria is an arietta in Italian, ariette or petit air in French.
ARIOSO	Adjectival description of a passage less formal and complete than a fully written aria, but sounding like one. Much recitative has arioso, or songlike, passages.
AZIONE TEATRALE	(It.: ' <i>theatrical action</i> ', ' <i>theatrical plot</i> '). A species of Serenata that, unlike many works in this genre, contained a definite plot and envisioned some form of staging.
ATONALITY	Lack of a definite tonal focus, all sharps and flats being applied in the score when necessary. With no key and therefore no sense of finality, such music sounds odd to the conservative ear, but with practice the listener can find pleasure in it.
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR	The person responsible for the artistic concept of the opera – the overall look and “feel” of the production.
BACKDROP	A large, painted surface at the rear of the stage, associated with old-fashioned stage settings, two-dimensional, but often striving with painted shadows and perspective to suggest a third dimension.
BACKSTAGE	The area of the stage not visible to the audience, usually where the dressing rooms are located.
BALLAD OPERA	A play with many songs; the number has ranged from fifteen to seventy-five. In the early eighteenth century its music was drawn from popular folk song or quite sophisticated songs appropriated from successful operas.
BANDA	A group of musicians who perform onstage or slightly offstage.
BARITONE	The male singing voice which is higher than a bass but lower than a tenor.
BAROQUE	A style of art and music characteristic in particular of the Louis XIV period in France and the Charles II period and after in England. Baroque pictorial art is associated with theatrical energy and much decoration but nevertheless respects classical principles. The music theater of the Baroque, highly pictorial, developed the opera seria, with comic intermezzi between the acts.
BASS	The lowest male singing voice.
BEL CANTO	Although meaning simply “beautiful song,” the term is usually applied to the school of singing prevalent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Baroque and Romantic) which gave much attention to vocal purity, control, and dexterity in ornamentation.
BRAVO (A) (I)	An acknowledgement of a good performance shouted during moments of applause (the ending is determined by the gender and the number of performers).
BRAVURA	Implying brilliance and dexterity (bravura singing, a bravura aria, etc.). Intended for display and the technical execution of difficult passages.

CABALETTA	A fast, contrasting short aria sung at the close of or shortly following a slower aria (called a <i>cantabile</i> , often for vocal effect only but sometimes dramatically motivated).
CADENCE	A resting place or close of a passage of music, clearly establishing tonality.
CADENZA	An elaborate passage near the end of an aria, which shows off the singer's vocal ability.
CAMERATA	A group of musicians, poets and scholars who met in Florence in 1600 and created opera.
CANTILENA	Originally a little song, but now generally referring to smooth cantabile (<i>It</i> : 'singable,' or 'singing') passages.
CAVATINA	Originally an aria without a repeated section. Later used casually in place of aria.
CHORUS	A group of singers (called choristers) who portray townspeople, guests or other unnamed characters; also refers to the music written for these people.
CHORUS MASTER	Person who prepares the chorus musically (which includes rehearsing and directing them).
CLAQUE	A group attending performances in the larger opera houses and paid by leading singers to encourage and direct applause (a member of which is a claqueur).
COLORATURA	A voice that can sing music with many rapid notes, or the music written for such a voice.
COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE	Masked comedy or improvised Italian comedy of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. A popular theatrical form with a sketched-out plot and stock characters, a pair of lovers without masks surrounded by comedians—Arlecchino, Brighella, Pantalone, Dottore, etc. Some of Mozart's and Rossini's operas retain the vestiges of these characters. Strauss, Busoni, and other recent composers have deliberately used them.
COMPRIMARIO	A small singing role, often a servant or other minor character.
CONDUCTOR	The person who supervises all musical detail, rehearsals and leads the orchestra and advises the artistic director about the hiring of singers and musical staff (also called the music director).
CONTRALTO	The lowest female singing voice.
COUNTERTENOR	The highest natural male voice, not a castrato. True male altos may be heard in choirs. The term falsettist is sometimes used but disputed.
CYCLORAMA	A curved curtain or wall enclosing the playing area of the stage and hiding the work areas behind it.
DA CAPO	(<i>It</i> : 'from the top, or back to the beginning'). A familiar direction in music. A da capo aria of the Baroque period repeats the first part of the aria, with different embellishments, after the singing of a contrasting second part.
DESIGNER	The person who creates the lighting, costumes or sets.
DIAPHRAGM	The muscle which separates the chest cavity from the abdominal cavity. It is used by singers for breath control and it allows them to "project" their voices to the back of the auditorium.
DIRECTOR	The person who instructs the singer/actors in their movements on stage and in the interpretation of their roles.
DOWNSTAGE	The front of the stage nearest the audience.
DRAME LYRIQUE	(<i>It</i> : <i>dramma lirico</i>). Modern term for opera, not necessarily of a lyrical character. The English term "lyrical drama" is used in the same way.


DRAMMA PER MUSICA	A term that refers to text expressly written to be set by a composer and by extension also to the composition. The term was the one most commonly used for serious Italian opera in the eighteenth century (as opposed to the modern term opera seria, with which it is in effect interchangeable).
DUET	Music written for two people to play or sing together.
EMBELLISHMENT	Decoration or ornament. A grace-note addition to the vocal line (also instrumental) of any kind, a four-note turn, or a trill.
ENSEMBLE	Three or more people singing at the same time, or the music written for such a group.
FALSETTO	The falsetto voice is of high pitch and produced by the vibrations of only one part of the vocal folds. The normal male voice sounds strained and effeminate in falsetto, but a natural alto or high tenor can produce effective vocal sound by this method. It is a singing mannerism to produce high tenor notes in falsetto.
FESTA TEATRALE	(<i>It.</i> : <i>'theatrical celebration'</i>). A title applied to a dramatic work. Feste teatrali fall into two quite distinct classes: opera and serenatas.
FINALE	The last musical number of an opera, or of an act of an opera.
FIORITURA	(<i>It.</i> : <i>'flowering'</i> , <i>'flourish'</i> ; plural <i>fioriture</i>). When a composition for the voice contains decorative writing such as scales, arpeggios, trills and gruppetti (the groups of notes sometimes known in English as 'turns'), it is described as 'florid' and the decorations themselves will be described collectively as 'fioritura'. It is a more accurate term than 'coloratura', which is frequently used as an alternative.
FLATS	Stretched canvas and wood panels on which scenery is painted.
FLIES	The space above a stage where scenery is "flown" when not in use. A counterweight system simplifies raising and lowering flats, larger set pieces, and back drops.
FULL DRESS REHEARSAL	The final rehearsal before opening night with all singers present in full costume.
GRAND OPERA	Traditionally, a serious epic or historical work in four or five acts which makes extensive use of the chorus and also includes a ballet. Also contains magnificent special effects.
GRID	Gridiron. Framework from which lines are hung and battens attached for the "flying" of scenery. The grid is situated high in the flies just beneath the ceiling of the fly loft.
HANDLUNG FÜR MUSIK	(<i>Ger.</i> : <i>'action in music'</i>). Term used by Wagner to describe the libretto for <i>Lobengrin</i> and <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> ; it has occasionally been used since.
INTERLUDE	A short piece of instrumental music played between scenes or acts to fill in delays brought about by scenery changes.
INTERMEZZO	An instrumental interlude played between acts, or short two-act comic opera played between the acts of an opera seria.
LEITMOTIV	A recurring musical figure used to identify a person, event or idea.
LEGATO	A smooth, flowing line. In vocal music it demands steadiness of emission and a sensitivity to phrasing.
LIBRETTO	The words of an opera.

MASKING	A scenic frame or device to prevent the audience from seeing into the wings of the stage. Door and window openings are usually masked, often with realistic backings.
MASQUE	An entertainment popular in the late sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth. A form of “total theater,” it combined music, scenic splendor, poetry, and some drama. Milton’s <i>Comus</i> , with music by Henry Lawes, is the most celebrated.
MELODRAMA	A basically serious play, frequently using comedy for relief, it only outwardly resembles tragedy. The conflicts and calamities are more interesting in themselves than are the characters, who tend to be stereotyped, good and bad. Passion, excitement, and action, often unmotivated, are emphasized. Intended for indiscriminating audiences, it uses much music to stimulate the emotions and much scenic effect to please the eye.
MÉLODRAME	In addition to being the French word for melodrama, this term refers to a technique, which became popular during the eighteenth century, of playing orchestral music under or between the phrases of spoken dialogue.
MELODRAMMA	Dramma per musica (drama for music) and Melodramma (sung drama) antedate by many years the term opera, now in general use for works of this kind.
MEZZA VOCE	Half-voice, with reference to a passage required to be sung softly throughout. A similar term, <i>messa di voce</i> , has the different meaning of beginning a tone softly, swelling it gradually, and then softening it again.
MEZZO-SOPRANO	The middle female singing voice, lower than soprano but higher than contralto.
MOTIVE	A short musical idea on which a melody is based.
MUSICAL PLAY	A convenient but inexact designation which has become popular in English-speaking countries to distinguish the more ambitious works in the popular field of lyric theater from (a) European operetta or imitations thereof, (b) musical comedy of the vaudevillian sort, and (c) opera, especially in New York where the form is supposed to belong to the Metropolitan and the New York City Opera Company and is somewhat provincially considered “poison at the box office.” David Ewen regards <i>Show Boat</i> , 1927, as the first work of the new genre, the musical play. By the 1930s, this term had become a catchall.
OPERA	A term now used to cover musical-dramatic pieces of all kinds except musical comedy and operetta, although comic opera comes very close to these forms. The seventeenth-century Italian term for opera was <i>Dramma per musica</i> or <i>Melodramma</i> .
OPERA BUFFA	A precise Italian definition, meaning Italian comic opera of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Musical numbers are strung along a continuum of dry recitative.
OPÉRA COMIQUE	French light opera of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Strictly speaking, any theater piece written with spoken dialogue between the musical numbers (<i>Faust</i> , <i>Carmen</i> , and <i>Manon</i>) whether a comedy or not. The Paris Opéra Comique is also called the Salle Favart and was originally the home of all works using spoken dialogue, while the Opéra confined itself to through-composed works.
OPERA SERIA	Literally “serious opera.” An opera form of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries which uses historical, biblical or mythological subjects with a focus on revenge, danger and death.

OPERETTA	A loosely used term, often used interchangeably with comic opera, opéra bouffe, and musical comedy. In Italian it originally meant “little opera,” a short, light musical work. It has come to mean a full-length piece on a light subject, with musical numbers and spoken dialogue, and characterized by ingratiating tunes, decorative dances, colorful settings, social irresponsibility, a slender dramatic line, and the requirement of at least two well-trained voices.
ORATORIO	A musical-dramatic work originating in the twelfth century, now generally performed, in contradistinction to opera, without action, costumes, and scenery. They are invariably associated with sacred subjects.
ORCHESTRA PIT	The sunken area in front of the stage where the orchestra sits.
OVERTURE	An orchestral introduction to the opera, usually played before the acting begins.
PARLANDO	(<i>It: ‘in speaking style’</i>). An informal and realistic technique occasionally used in Italian opera, bringing singing close to speaking.
PORTAMENTO	An Italian singing term, asking the voice to glide from one note to another at some distance. An authentic and effective device, to be distinguished from the mannerism of scooping.
PRINCIPAL	A major singing role, or the singer who performs such a role.
PROSCENIUM	The stage opening, resembling a three-sided picture frame. Immediately behind it and concealing the acting areas is the curtain. The proscenium arch was originally created in the 1700s to conceal the machinery used to create special stage effects.
QUARTET	Four singers, or the music written for that group.
RECITATIVE	Musical singing in the rhythm of speech.
RECITATIVO ACCOMPAGNATO	A sung passage with orchestral accompaniment, lacking the formality of an aria, yet more declamatory and agitated than recitativo secco.
RECITATIVO SECCO	Dry recitative. A sung passage so close to everyday speech that although the pitches and time values are respected, a conversational quality prevails. A keyboard instrument generally supplies the sketchy accompaniment. Commonly used in Italian opera seria and opera buffa.
REPERTORY	A system of stage production in which a number of works are played, virtually in rotation, by a resident company throughout a season.
RÉPÉTITION	French term for “rehearsal.” A répétition générale is a dress rehearsal to which critics and guests are invited.
REVOLVE	Revolving stage. Turntable. A section of the stage floor (permanently established) or a circular construction on a central pivot which revolves, to change scenery or supply movement of objects as well as people.
RITORNELLO	A short instrumental piece, literally meaning repetition or refrain. In Monteverdi’s works it usually consists of a few bars played between the verses of a strophic song.
ROCOCO	In art, associated with the late Baroque period and the late eighteenth century. In contrast to the dignity, heaviness, and occasional pomposity of Baroque, Rococo art is playful, lighter in tone and color, and adorned with scrolls, acorns, and shells.
ROLE	The character that a singer portrays.

ROMANTICISM	The movement strongly associated with nineteenth-century Germany, but felt through all Europe and responsible for far-reaching changes in all forms of art. Rebels against the establishment (which was founded on a deep respect for the classics), the romanticists opposed authority and advocated freedom from formal regulations. They encouraged a subjective, strongly emotional approach as an antidote to classical decorum.
SCORE	The music of an opera or other musical work in which the parts for different performers appear vertically above one another.
SCRIM	A thin curtain, often painted. When lit from behind, one can see through it.
SERENATA	A dramatic cantata, normally celebratory or eulogistic in intent, for two or more singers with orchestral accompaniment. In dramaturgical respects the serenata most closely resembles the Baroque oratorio.
SINFONIA	A symphonic work the precedes an opera (English: overture); a shorter version is referred to as a <i>prelude</i> .
SINGSPIEL	A German form of comic opera with spoken dialogue.
SITZPROBE	A sit-down rehearsal where the performers sing with the orchestra for the first time.
SOPRANO	The highest female singing voice.
SPRECHSTIMME	A form of declamation halfway between speech and song. Instead of exactly notated pitch an approximation is given. The time, however, is given exactly and the singer is not allowed absolute license. Notations up and down are also meant to be respected. This style of singing is found in the works of Schoenberg and Berg.
STAGE LEFT	The left side of the stage from the performer's perspective as s/he faces the audience.
STAGE RIGHT	The right side of the stage from the performer's perspective as s/he faces the audience.
STRETTA	An accelerated passage at the end of an aria, scene, or act.
TENOR	The highest male singing voice.
TESSITURA	Literally "texture." The approximate range of a role or an aria.
THROUGH-COMPOSED	Through-composed opera is a continuous music drama uninterrupted by spoken dialogue or obviously recognizable recitative.
TRAGÉDIE LYRIQUE	A French term associated mainly with Lully and Rameau. Tragédie lyrique comes somewhat closer to the spoken play in dramatic expressiveness than does the Italian opera seria of the same period, which may exceed it in vocal expressiveness.
TRILL	A musical ornament requiring the rapid alternation of two adjacent notes.
TROUSER ROLE	Also called "pants role." The part of a male character sung by a woman, usually a mezzo-soprano.
UNDERSTUDY	A replacement for a particular role in case of illness or emergency (also called a "cover").
VERISMO	A type of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Italian opera that emphasized realistic subjects.
WANDELPROBE	Musical rehearsal which allows the conductor to hear what the singers sound like when they perform on the set.
WINGS	The sides of the stage where the performers wait before making their entrances.
Sources:	<i>Opera: Dead or Alive</i> , by Ronald E. Mitchell. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970. <i>New Grove Dictionary of Opera</i> , edited by Stanley Sadie. London: MacMillan Press Limited, 1992. New York City Opera Education Department, Edmonton Opera

ADAGIO	Slowly and smoothly.	BAR	A vertical line across the staff that divides the music into units.
AD LIBITUM	As you please; freely.	BUFFO, BUFFA	Comic.
AFFECTUOSO	Expressively; tenderly; lovingly.	CADENZA	A flourish or brilliant part of an aria commonly inserted just before a finale.
AGITATO	Agitated.	CANTABILE	Songlike; singingly.
ALBERTI BASS	Stereotyped figures of accompaniment, consisting of broken chords.	CANTATA	A choral piece generally containing scriptural narrative texts.
		CON BRIO	With spirit.
ALLARGANDO	Slowing and broadening.	CONTINUO	A bass part (as for a keyboard or stringed instrument) that was used especially in baroque ensemble music; it consists of a succession of bass notes with figures that indicate the required chords. Also called figured bass, thoroughbass.
ALLEGRETTO	Fairly lively; not as fast as allegro.	COUNTERPOINT	Music consisting of two or more lines that sound simultaneously.
ALLEGRO	Lively; fast.	CRESCENDO	Gradually getting louder.
A MEZZO VOCE	With half the voice.		
ANDANTE	Going; moving; at a moderate rate.	DIATONIC	Relating to a major or minor musical scale that comprises intervals of five whole steps and two half steps.
ANDANTINO	Slightly faster than andante.	DIMINUENDO	Gradually getting softer.
ANIMATO	With spirit; animated.		
APPOGGIATURA	An extra or embellishing note preceding a main melodic note or tone. Usually written as a note of smaller size, it shares the time value of the main note.	DIMINUTION	The presentation of a melody in halved values so that, e.g. the quarter notes become eighth notes.
ARPEGGIO	Producing the tones of a chord in succession but not simultaneously.	DISSONANCE	A mingling of discordant sounds that do not harmonize within the diatonic scale.
ASSAI	Very; very much.	DOLOROSAMENTE	Sadly; grievingly.
A TEMPO	At the preceding rate of speed.		
ATONAL	Music that is not anchored in traditional musical tonality; it uses the chromatic scale impartially, does not use the diatonic scale and has no keynote or tonal center.		
AUGMENTATION	The presentation of a melody in doubled values so that, e.g. the quarter notes become half notes.		

DOMINANT	The fifth tone of the diatonic scale: in the key of C, the dominant is G.	MOSSO	Moved; agitated; lively.
FERMATA 	Pause sign; prolonged time value of note so marked.	MOTO	Motion; movement.
FORTE <i>f</i>	Loud.	OBBLIGATO	An elaborate accompaniment to a solo or principal melody that is usually played by a single instrument.
FORTISSIMO <i>ff</i>	Very loud.	OCTAVE	A musical interval embracing eight diatonic degrees: therefore, from C ¹ to C ² is an octave.
FURIOSO	Furious; violent.	ORNAMENTATION	Extra embellishing notes – appoggiaturas, trills, roulades, or cadenzas – that enhance a melodic line.
GIOCOSO	Playfully.	OVERTURE	An orchestral introduction to an act or the whole opera. An overture can appear only at the beginning of an opera.
GIUSTO	Strict; exact.	OSSIA	Or; or else; an alternate reading.
GLISSANDO	A rapid sliding up or down the scale.	PENTATONIC	A five-note scale, like the black notes within an octave on the piano.
GRANDIOSO	With grandeur; majestically.	PIACERE	To please.
GRAVE	Slow; heavy; solemn.	PIANO <i>p</i>	Soft.
GRAZIOSO	Elegantly; gracefully.	PIANISSIMO <i>pp</i>	Very soft.
LAMENTOSO	Mournfully.	PITCH	The property of a musical tone that is determined by the frequency of the waves producing it.
LARGHETTO	Somewhat less slowly than largo.	PIÙ	More.
LARGO	Broadly and slowly.	PIZZICATO	For bowed stringed instruments, an indication that the string is to be plucked with a finger.
LEGATO	Smoothly and connectedly.	POCO	Little.
LEGGIERO	Light; airy; graceful.	POLYPHONY	Literally “many voices.” A style of musical composition in which two or more independent melodies are juxtaposed in harmony; counterpoint.
LENTO	Slow.		
MAESTOSO	Majestic; stately; grand.		
MAESTRO	From the Italian “master”: a term of respect to conductors, composers, directors, and great musicians.		
MARCATO	Marked.		
MEZZO	Half; middle; medium.		
MISTERIOSO	With mystery.		
MODERATO	Moderately; at a moderate rate.		
MOLTO	Much; very.		
MORENDO	Dying away.		

POLYTONAL	The use of several tonal schemes simultaneously.	SOSTENUTO	Sustained.
PORTAMENTO	A continuous gliding movement from one tone to another.	SOTTO	Under; beneath.
PRESTO	Very fast; lively; quick.	STACCATO	Detached; separated.
QUAVER	An eighth note.	STRINGENDO	Hurried; accelerated.
RALLENTANDO	Gradually slower.	STROPHE	Music repeated for each verse of an aria.
RITARDANDO	Gradually slower.	SYNCOPATION	Shifting the beat forward or back from its usual place in the bar; it is a temporary displacement of the regular metrical accent in music caused typically by stressing the weak beat.
RITENUTO	Held back; slower.	TACET	Silent.
RITORNELLO	A short recurrent instrumental passage between elements of a vocal composition.	TEMPO	Rate of speed.
ROMANZA	A solo song that is usually sentimental; it is usually shorter and less complex than an aria and rarely deals with terror, rage and anger.	TONALITY	The organization of all the tones and harmonies of a piece of music in relation to a tonic (the first tone of its scale).
ROULADE	A florid vocal embellishment sung to one syllable.	TRISTE	Sad.
RUBATO	A way of playing or singing with regulated rhythmic freedom.	TWELVE-TONE	The 12 chromatic tones of the octave placed in a chosen fixed order and constituting with some permitted permutations and derivations the melodic and harmonic material of a serial musical piece. Each note of the chromatic scale is used as part of the melody before any other note gets repeated.
SEMITONE	One half of a whole tone, the smallest distance between two notes in Western music. In the key of C, the notes are E and F, and B and C.	VELOCE	Rapid.
SEMPLICE	Simply.	VIBRATO	A “vibration”; a slightly tremulous effect imparted to vocal or instrumental tone for added warmth and expressiveness by slight and rapid variations in pitch.
SEMPRE	Always.	VIVACE	Brisk; lively.
SENZA	Without.		
SERIAL MUSIC	Music based on a series of tones in a chosen pattern without regard for traditional tonality.		
SFORZANDO <i>sf</i>	With accent.		
SORDINO	Muted.		

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PHILIPS
416 492-2

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Davis; Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

LONDON
421 049-2

Freni, Pavarotti, Harwood, Panerai, Maffeo, Ghiaurov
Karajan; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra

RCA
3969-2RG

Moffo, Tucker, Costa, Merrill, Tozzi, Maero
Leinsdorf; Rome Opera Orchestra

ERATO
2292-45311-2

Hendricks, Carreras, Quilico, Blasi
Conlon; Orchestre National de France and Chœurs et Maitrise de Radio France

RCA
RCD2-0371

Caballé, Domingo, Milnes, Blegen, Sardinero, Raimondi
Solti; London Symphony Orchestra

VIDEOGRAPHY

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON

Scotto, Pavarotti, Niska, Wixell

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON

Stratas, Scotto, Carreras, Stilwell, Monk

EMI CLASSICS

Gheorghiu, Arteta, Vargas, Tezier, Kelsey

GENEAN

Stratas, Carreras, Scotto, Stilwell, Monk (Zeffirelli)

KULTUR VIDEO

Shicoff, Donlan, Gibbs, Nesterenko, Rawnsley

WORD SEARCH



1. The opera takes place in _____, France. ¹
2. The role of Rodolfo is sung by a _____ (voice type). ¹
3. Alcindoro was Musetta's _____. ²
4. Musetta really was in love with _____. ¹
5. The Bohemians had dinner at Café Momus on _____. ¹
6. Rodolfo uses his drama _____ to start a fire in his cold apartment. ¹
7. The landlord Benoit admits he likes to _____ with the ladies. ¹
8. Mimì drops her _____ in Rodolfo's apartment. ¹
9. Rodolfo helps Mimì to a chair when she grows faint from _____. ¹
10. Mimì loves to keep fresh _____ in her apartment to enjoy the sweet fragrance. ¹
11. The Bohemians leave an enormous _____ for Alcindoro to pay upon his return from the shoemaker. ¹
12. Musetta gives Marcello her _____ to be sold for medicine and a doctor. ¹
13. Mimì asks Musetta to get her a _____ to warm her cold, frail hands. ¹

Answers can be found in the following articles:

¹ *Synopsis*

² *Puccini biography*

³ *About the writing of La bohème*

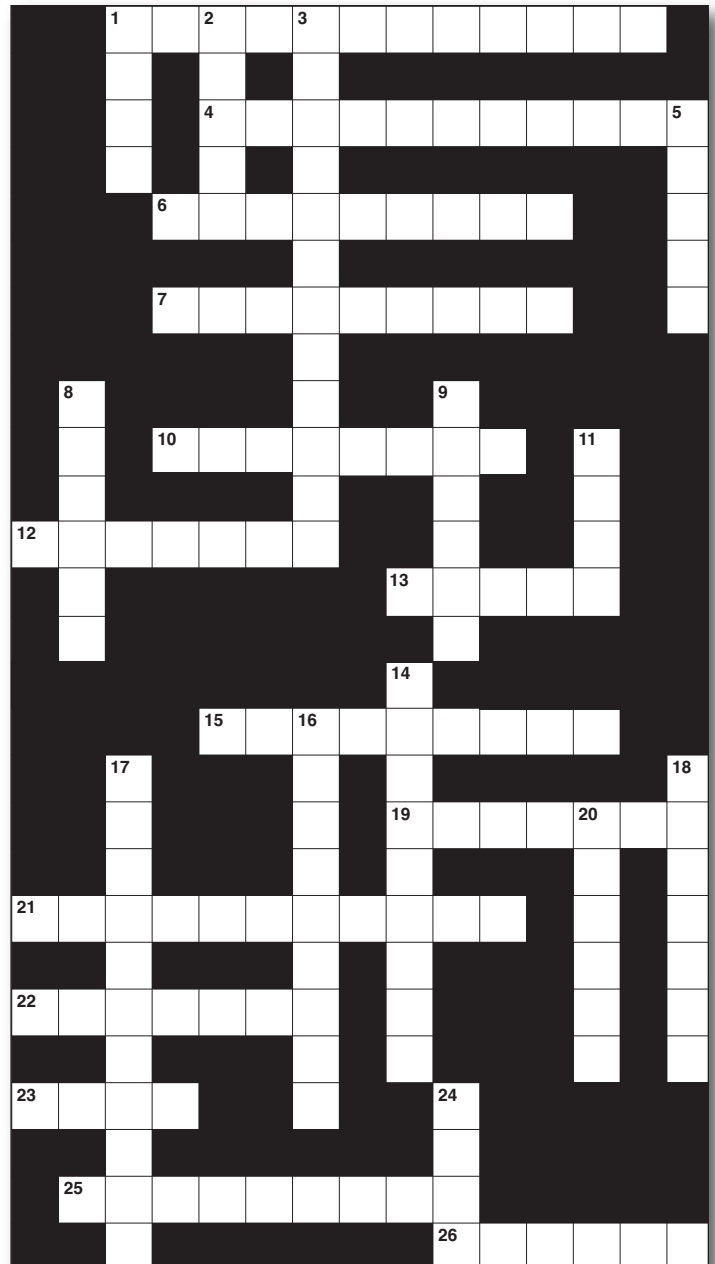
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

DOWN

1. _____ dies at the end of the opera. ¹
2. Puccini was born in this Italian city. ²
3. Puccini had a seaside villa near this town. ²
5. *La bohème* premiered in this Italian city. ¹
8. In Act I _____ “shocks” the Bohemians when they discover he has a young mistress. ¹
9. Rodolfo buys Mimì a _____ in Act II. ¹
11. Benoit unexpectedly shows up in Act I looking for the overdue _____. ¹
14. _____ charms the children with many toys in Act II. ¹
16. In Act I _____ tells his friends a story of an eccentric Englishman who had him play for his parrot. ¹
17. This composer claimed that Puccini stole his idea to compose an opera titled *La bohème*. ³
18. Giulio _____ kept Puccini and his librettists working together and eventually published the opera. ³
20. Luigi _____ is one of the librettists who worked on the opera with Puccini. ^{1, 2}
24. Musetta pretends that her _____ hurts her in order to send Alcindoro away. ¹

ACROSS

1. At the end of Act II Rodolfo, Mimi and their friends escape Alcindoro by hiding amongst a _____. ¹
4. Puccini liked to drive fast but eventually was hurt in a _____. ²
6. In Act II the Bohemians dine outdoors at the _____. ¹
7. The characters of *La bohème* are referred to as _____ after this region in Czechoslovakia. ¹
10. _____ was Puccini’s last opera. ²
12. In Act III _____ pretends to be jealous of Mimì because he says she’s a flirt but really he’s concerned for her health. ²
13. Puccini died of a _____ attack after undergoing treatment for cancer. ²
15. Arturo _____ conducted the first performance of *La bohème*. ²
19. As a young man _____ played piano in a house of ill-repute to help support his family. ²
21. _____ is the author of *Scènes de la vie de bohème* upon which the opera is based. ^{1, 3}



22. Giuseppe _____ is the other librettist who worked on *La bohème*. ²
23. In Act IV, Colline pawns his beloved _____ to help raise some money quickly. ¹
25. In Act II, Musetta embarrasses _____ when she sings her famous aria. ¹
26. _____ is the name of Puccini’s wife. ²

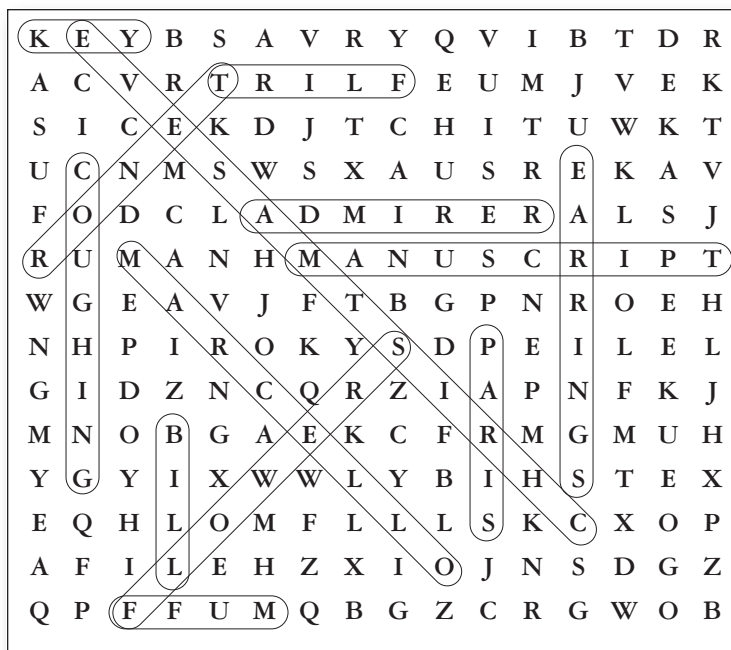
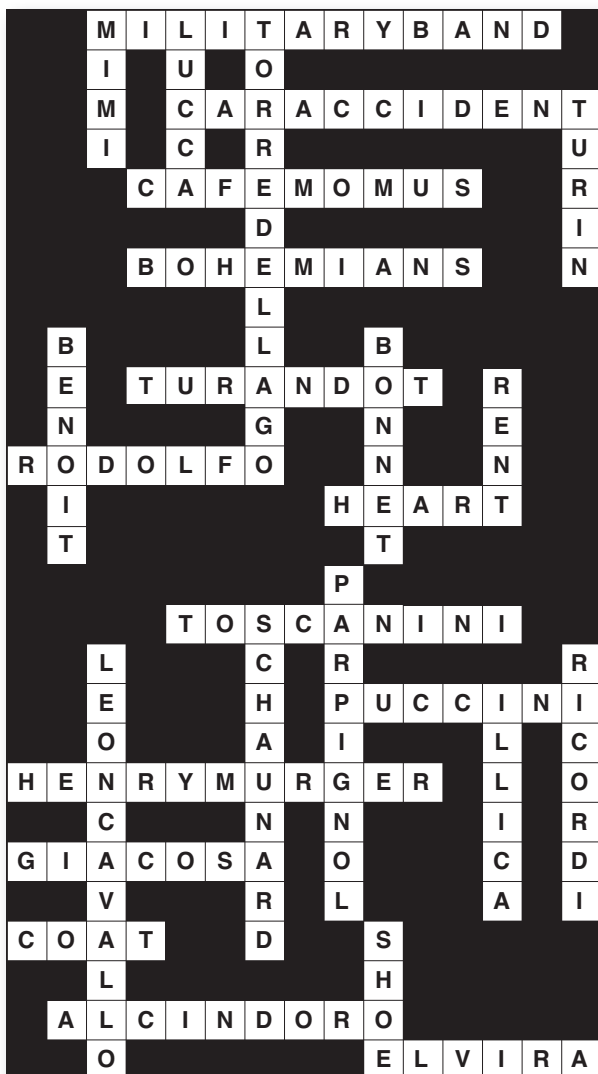
Answers can be found in the following articles:

¹ Synopsis

² Puccini biography

³ About the writing of *La bohème*

ANSWERS



WORD SEARCH ANSWERS

1. Paris
2. tenor
3. admirer
4. Marcello
5. Christmas Eve
6. manuscript
7. flirt
8. key
9. coughing
10. flowers
11. bill
12. earrings
13. muff



OPERA BOX TEACHER GUIDE EVALUATION

La bohème

- 1 I teach this subject and grade level(s): _____
- 2 I found the Opera Box useful:
- YES NO
- 3 These are the items I used: (check all that apply)
- _____ *La bohème* Libretto (G. Schirmer)
- _____ *La bohème* Full Score (Dover)
- _____ *La bohème* Vocal Score (G. Schirmer)
- _____ DVD *La bohème* (Australian Opera/Baz Luhrmann)
- _____ DVD *La bohème* (Metropolitan Opera/Levine, Carreras)
- _____ CD *La bohème* (Pavarotti, Freni, von Karajan)
- _____ CD *La bohème* (Tebaldi, Bergonzi, Serafin)
- _____ BOOK *The Complete Operas of Puccini* (Charles Osborne)
- _____ BOOK *Puccini and His Operas* (Stanley Sadie)
- _____ BOOK *La bohème* (Metropolitan Opera Classics Library)
- _____ BOOK *Opera, Composers, Works, Performers* (András Batta)
- 4 I wish I had the Opera Box for more time:
- YES NO
- 4A If you said YES, how much more time would you like to have? _____
- 5 Rental cost for the Opera Box was:
- LOW ACCEPTABLE HIGH
- 6 I used the material in this Opera Box to: (circle all that apply)
- Introduce my students to opera Continue my students' study of opera
- Prepare students prior to a performance Meet a Minnesota High Standard
- 7 Would you like to receive some training related to the content in the Opera Box?
- YES NO
- 8 Items I would like to see in future Opera Boxes: _____
- 9 I would attend a summer workshop about how to teach opera (with graduate credit available):
- YES NO
- 10 I used, or directed my students to, imagineopera.org website.
- YES NO
- 11 Please offer any further comments or suggestions on the back of this form.

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