

PITTSBURGH OPERA

January 17, 2019

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Pittsburgh Opera presents Puccini's masterpiece *La bohème*
When a candle flickers, love sparks

What:	La bohème Music by Giacomo Puccini ; libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa
Where:	Benedum Center for the Performing Arts, downtown Pittsburgh
When:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sat., March 30, 2019 * 8:00 PM • Tues., April 2, 2019 * 7:00 PM • Fri., April 5, 2019 * 7:30 PM • Sun., April 7, 2019 * 2:00 PM
Run Time:	2 hours, 27 minutes, with two intermissions
Language:	Sung in Italian with English texts projected above the stage
Tickets:	<p>Single tickets for adults start at \$14; tickets for kids and teens ages 6-18 are half-price. Student discounts available. Call 412-456-6666 or visit pittsburghopera.org/tickets.</p> <p>Group Discounts available for groups of six or more.</p>
Media Events	<p>Photo Call (March 18, 12:30 PM) – location TBA</p> <p>Full Dress Rehearsal (March 28, 7:00 PM), Benedum Center</p>
Related Events	<p>Free Brown Bag concert (3/9)</p> <p>Opera Up Close (3/17)</p> <p>WQED Preview (3/23 & 3/29)</p> <p>New Guard Lounge (3/30)</p> <p>Meet the Artists (4/2)</p> <p>Audio Commentary (4/2)</p>
See pages 5-7 of this release.	

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Photo by David Bachman for Pittsburgh Opera

Pittsburgh, PA... [Pittsburgh Opera](#) returns to the Benedum Center with Puccini's [La bohème](#), opera's biggest tear-jerker, March 30-April 7.

Set against the backdrop of 1830s Paris, **La bohème** follows four impoverished artists surviving with little more than friendship, passion, and love for their art. When Rodolfo, a poet, and Mimì, a young seamstress, meet, the two are drawn into a tumultuous and passionate affair with a love that can only be broken by death.

Emotional and dramatic, it's no wonder Puccini's most celebrated opera has transcended the genre, inspiring both a ballet and the Broadway hit musical RENT.

La bohème will make you laugh, and bring you to tears, with its timeless story and captivating music.

[Nicole Cabell](#), winner of the [BBC Singer of the World Competition](#), makes her Pittsburgh Opera debut as Mimì. [Jean-Luc Tingaud](#) conducts. [Stephanie Havey](#) directs.

As always, English supertitles will be projected above the stage.

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Fun facts about *La bohème*

1. **La bohème** was based on the 1851 book "[Scenes of Bohemian Life](#)" by [Henri Murger](#), based on his own impoverished bohemian Parisian life. The book was a collection of stories, not a novel with a standard plot. Most of the stories had been previously published individually in a Parisian magazine between 1845 and 1849, before Murger and Théodore Barrière co-wrote a play based on them in 1849. The play's success created demand for a book containing all the stories, which was published in 1851.
2. Puccini's opera **La bohème** premiered in 1896. In 1897, a second opera with the same name and storyline debuted, written by Ruggero Leoncavallo. Leoncavallo's is rarely performed today.
3. The two lead singers in Pittsburgh Opera's production are both veterans of TV singing competitions. Sean Panikkar (Rodolfo), a Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist alum, was a star on [America's Got Talent](#) in 2013 as a member of the vocal group Forte. Nicole Cabell (Mimi) won the 2005 [BBC Singer of the World Competition](#) in Cardiff, Wales.

The story, in brief

ACT I. In their Latin Quarter garret on Christmas Eve, the painter Marcello and poet Rodolfo try to keep warm by burning pages from Rodolfo's latest drama. They are joined by their comrades—Colline, a young philosopher, and Schaunard, a musician who has landed a job and brings food, fuel, and funds (Legna! . . . Sigari!). While they celebrate their unexpected fortune, the landlord, Benoit, arrives to collect the rent. Plying the older man with wine, they urge him to tell of his flirtations, then throw him out in mock indignation. As the friends depart for a celebration at the nearby Café Momus, Rodolfo promises to join them soon, staying behind to finish writing an article. There's another knock; a neighbor, Mimì, says her candle has gone out on the drafty stairs. Offering her wine when she feels faint, Rodolfo relights her candle and helps her to the door. Mimì realizes she has dropped her key, and as the two search for it, both candles are blown out. In the moonlight the poet takes the girl's shivering hand (Che gelida manina "What a cold little hand") telling her his dreams. She then recounts her solitary life (Sì, mi chiamano Mimì "Yes, they call me Mimì"), embroidering flowers and waiting for spring. Drawn to each other, Mimì and Rodolfo leave for the café (O soave fanciulla "Oh lovely girl").

ACT II. Amid shouts of street hawkers, Rodolfo buys Mimì a bonnet near the Café Momus and introduces her to his friends. They all sit and order supper. A toy vendor, Parpignol, passes by, besieged by children. Marcello's former lover, Musetta, enters on the arm of the elderly, wealthy Alcindoro. Trying to regain the painter's attention, she sings a waltz about her popularity (Quando me'n vo "When I walk"). Complaining that her shoe pinches, Musetta sends Alcindoro to fetch a new pair, then falls into Marcello's arms. The bohemians leave Alcindoro to face the bill when he returns.

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ACT III. At dawn on the snowy outskirts of Paris, a Customs Officer admits farm women to the city. Musetta and revelers are heard inside a tavern. Soon Mimì walks by, searching for the place where the reunited Marcello and Musetta now live. When the painter emerges, she pours out her distress over Rodolfo's incessant jealousy (Mimì! . . . Speravo di trovarvi qui). It is best they part, she says. Rodolfo, who has been asleep in the tavern, is heard, and Mimì hides; Marcello thinks she has left. The poet tells Marcello he wants to separate from his fickle sweetheart. Pressed further, he breaks down, saying Mimì is dying; her ill health can only worsen in the poverty they share. Overcome, Mimì stumbles forward to bid her lover farewell (Addio . . . D'onde lieta uscì al tuo grido) as Marcello runs back into the tavern to investigate Musetta's raucous laughter. While Mimì and Rodolfo recall their happiness, Musetta quarrels with Marcello (Dunque è proprio finite). The painter and his mistress part in fury, but Mimì and Rodolfo decide to stay together until spring.

ACT IV. Some months later, Rodolfo and Marcello lament their loneliness in the garret (O Mimì, tu più non torni). Colline and Schaunard bring a meager meal. The four stage a dance, which turns into a mock fight. The merrymaking is ended when Musetta bursts in, saying Mimì is downstairs, too weak to climb up. As Rodolfo runs to her, Musetta tells how Mimì has begged to be taken to her lover to die. While Mimì is made comfortable, Marcello goes with Musetta to sell her earrings for medicine, and Colline leaves to pawn his cherished overcoat (Vecchia zimarra "Old coat"). Alone, Mimì and Rodolfo recall their first days together (Sono andati? "Have they gone?"), but she is seized with coughing. When the others return, Musetta gives Mimì a muff to warm her hands and prays for her life. Mimì dies quietly (Dorme? . . . Riposa), and when Schaunard discovers she is dead, Rodolfo runs to her side, calling her name.

-Courtesy of Opera News

Ticketing Information

- Single tickets for adults start at \$14; tickets for kids and teens ages 6-18 are half-price. Call 412-456-6666 or visit pittsburghopera.org/tickets.
- Group discounts, including student discounts, are available. For more information about [group ticket services and discounts](#), contact Regina Connolly at (412) 281-0912, ext. 213 or groups@pittsburghopera.org.

Sponsors

- [PNC](#) is the 2018-19 Pittsburgh Opera Season Sponsor
- [WQED-FM](#) is Pittsburgh Opera's Media Sponsor
- [Ambridge Regional Distribution and Manufacturing Center](#) is the Tuesday performance sponsor

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Cast and Artistic Team: *La bohème*

Mimi	Nicole Cabell ⁺
Rodolfo	Sean Panikkar ^{**}
Marcello	Craig Verm ^{**}
Musetta	Sari Gruber
Benoit/Alcindoro	Kevin Glavin ^{**}
Schaunard	Ben Taylor [*]
Colline	Tyler Zimmerman [*]
Parpignol	Terrence Chin-Loy [*]
Conductor	Jean-Luc Tingaud
Stage Director	Stephanie Havey ^{**}
Scenic Designer	Michael Yeargan
Costume Designer	Zack Brown
Lighting Designer	Andrew Ostrowski
Stage Manager	Cindy Knight
Asst Stage Director	Matthew Haney [*]
Asst Stage Manager	Alex W. Seidel
Asst Stage Manager	Nick Garcia
Wig and Make-up Designer	James Geier
Asst Wig and Make-up Designer	Nicole Pagano
Asst Lighting Designer	Todd Nonn
Prop Master	Johnmichael Bohach
Asst Conductor	Glenn Lewis
Chorus Master	Mark Trawka
Associate Coach/Pianist	James Lesniak

+ Pittsburgh Opera debut

* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist

** Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist alumni

Related Events for *La bohème*

March Brown Bag concert

Saturday, March 9, Noon - 1:00 PM

George R. White Opera Studio, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)

You're invited to our free March Brown Bag concert! We will focus on the Italian greats with a special preview of our upcoming production of [La bohème](#), plus a performance of "Bella figlia dell'amore," the famous quartet from [Rigoletto](#), and more.

Doors open at 11:30 AM. Handicapped parking is available by reservation. For more information: 412-281-0912 or <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/march-brown-bag-concert3>.

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Opera Up Close: *La bohème*
Sunday, March 17, 2:00 - 3:30 PM
Founders' Room, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)

Join Robert Boldin, Artistic Administrator, and special guests from the production, for an in-depth look at Puccini's **La bohème**

Admission is \$5; free to members of [FRIENDS of Pittsburgh Opera](#) or the [New Guard](#), and \$50+ donors. Handicapped parking is available by reservation. For more information: 412-281-0912 or <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/opera-up-close-la-boheme>.

***La bohème* Previews on WQED-FM 89.3 and WQED.ORG**
Saturday, March 23, 12:30 - 1:00 PM
Friday, March 29, 7:00 - 7:30 PM

Hosted by WQED's Anna Singer, and broadcast over the airwaves on WQED-FM 89.3 as well as the WQED website, WQED's preview of **La bohème** gives listeners an engaging introduction to the singers, music, and story of the opera. For more information: <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/wqed-preview-la-boheme1>.

[Pittsburgh Opera New Guard](#) opening night lounge
Saturday, March 30th –prior to the performance and during intermission
South Lounge at the Benedum Center

The Pittsburgh Opera [New Guard](#) is a community for young professionals, ages 21-40, who have a passion for Pittsburgh Opera. Members can enjoy exclusive access to a free lounge, with private bartender, at opening night performances at the Benedum Center. Membership also comes with free and discounted opera tickets, pre-sales or special rates for Pittsburgh Opera Special Events, and more. [Visit our website](#) or [join our Facebook group](#) for future event details.

Audio Commentary: *La bohème*
Tuesday, April 2, 7:00 PM
Benedum Center

Ticketholders with visual impairments are invited to use [Pittsburgh Opera's Audio Description service](#) at our Tuesday performances. Trained volunteers describe the supertitles, scenery, costumes, and stage action. The listeners hear these descriptions via assistive listening devices. Those wishing to use Audio Description should reserve seats to the Tuesday, April 2, performance of **La bohème** by contacting Regina Connolly at 412-281-0912, ext. 213, or groups@pittsburghopera.org. Braille and large-print programs are available at all performances.

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Meet the Artists of *La bohème*
Tuesday, April 2, immediately following the performance
Benedum Center lower lobby

Pittsburgh Opera [General Director Christopher Hahn](#) interviews the stars of **La bohème** in the Benedum Center lower lobby after the Tuesday evening performance. You can ask your own questions and mingle with the artists too! Free to all Tuesday ticketholders.

“Meet the Artists” is generously sponsored by Ambridge Regional Distribution and Manufacturing Center.

Learn more at <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/meet-the-artists-la-boheme>.

COMING UP NEXT for Pittsburgh Opera:

[Don Pasquale](#) , Donizetti’s ultimate comedy, April 27 - May 5, 2019

Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 80th season in 2018-19. Established by five intrepid women in 1939, Pittsburgh Opera is viewed as one of the most vibrant opera organizations in the U.S., with a rich artistic tradition, outstanding educational programs, an acclaimed artist training program, and a progressive outlook toward the future. Its green initiative culminated in LEED® Silver certification for its Strip District headquarters, and its capacity as a true community partner has increased significantly under General Director Christopher Hahn’s leadership.

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