



La Bohème: Background and Characters

Music by Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Luigi Illica and Guisepppe Giacosa

Puccini had intended to base an opera on Murger's novel *Scenes of the Bohemian Life* from the winter of 1893, just prior to the première of *Manon Lescaut*. The novel, about the lives of struggling young Parisian artists and writers in the 1840s, also had the attention of Puccini's rival Leoncavallo, who wished to compose his own opera based on Murger's book. Both Puccini and Leoncavallo argued over who discovered the story and the two would eventually engage in a race to see who would finish their opera first. Puccini's *La Bohème* premiered at the Teatro Regio in Turin, on February 1, 1896, more than a year before Leoncavallo would stage his own version.

This is a COC Production and was last performed in 2005.

Sung in Italian with English SURTITLES™

**Interested in reading Murger's book
*Scènes de la vie bohème?***

Read it online here at

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/18445/18445-h/18445-h.htm>

MAIN CHARACTERS

Name	Description	Voice Type	Pronunciation
Rodolfo	<i>a poet, in love with Mimi</i>	Tenor	roh-DOHL-foh
Mimi	<i>a seamstress</i>	Soprano	mee-MEE
Marcello	<i>a painter</i>	Baritone	mahr-CHEH-loh
Schaunard	<i>a musician</i>	Baritone	shoh-NAHR
Colline	<i>a philosopher</i>	Bass	koh-LEE-neh
Musetta	<i>a singer</i>	Soprano	moo-ZEH-tah
Benoit	<i>the landlord</i>	Bass	behn-WAH
Alcindoro	<i>a state councillor</i>	Bass	ahl-cheen-DOH-roh
Parpignol	<i>a toy vendor</i>	Tenor	PAHR-peen-yohl
A customs official		Bass	

The chorus members take on many roles in the opera. See if you can spot the chorus playing the roles of: students, working girls, townfolk, shopkeepers, street vendors, soldiers, waiters, and children!

The performances this season are:
April 17, 19, 25, 30, May 4, 9, 12,
14, 17, 20, 22, 24, 2009.

All performances will take place in the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, Toronto.