



ROYAL
OPERA

THE ROYAL OPERA

Music Director

SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO *cvo*

Director of Opera

OLIVER MEARS

LA BOHÈME

OPERA IN FOUR ACTS

Music **GIACOMO PUCCINI**

Libretto **GIUSEPPE GIACOSA AND LUIGI ILLICA** after Henri
Murger's novel *Scènes de la vie de Bohème*

Conductor **KERI-LYNN WILSON**

Director **RICHARD JONES**

Revival Director **SIMON IORIO**

Designer **STEWART LAING**

Lighting Designer **MIMI JORDAN SHERIN**

Movement Director **SARAH FAHIE**

Revival Movement Director **DANIELLE URBAS**

ROYAL OPERA CHORUS

Chorus Director **WILLIAM SPAULDING**

ORCHESTRA OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

Concert Master **SERGEY LEVITIN**

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Co-production with **TEATRO REAL, MADRID** and

LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO

MONDAY 22 JANUARY 2024 AT 4.30PM

General rehearsal

APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

The performance lasts about 2 hours 35 minutes, including one interval.

ACT I 40 minutes

ACT II 20 minutes

INTERVAL 30 minutes

ACT III 30 minutes

ACT IV 35 minutes

LANGUAGE

Sung in Italian with English subtitles

CAST

Marcello **MIKHAIL TIMOSHENKO**

Rodolfo **LEONARDO CAIMI** replaces **SAIMIR PIRGU**

Colline **ALEXANDER KÖPECZI**

Schaunard **HANSUNG YOO**

Benoît **JEREMY WHITE**

Mimi **YARITZA VÉLIZ** replaces **RUZAN MANTASHYAN**

Parpignol **ANDREW MACNAIR**

Musetta **LAUREN FAGAN**

Alcindoro **EDDIE WADE**

Customs Officer **JOHN MORRISSEY**

Sergeant **THOMAS BARNARD**

SAIMIR PIRGU and **RUZAN MANTASHYAN** have withdrawn from today's rehearsal of *La bohème* due to illness. The roles of Rodolfo and Mimi will be performed by **LEONARDO CAIMI** and **YARITZA VÉLIZ**.

Christmas Eve revellers, Bohemians, waiters, street sweepers, milkmaids, peasant women, children

Actors **PAUL DENNISON, JAMIE FRANCIS, NICHOLAS FRENTZ, RICHARD GITTINS, GLODY KIAKIANI, ANTHONY KURT-GABEL, ANDREW LEISHMAN, DANIELLE MEEHAN, DAVY QUISTIN, XOLISWEH RICHARDS, SEBASTIAN ROSE, TIMO WILLMAN**

With special thanks to **THE CARDINAL VAUGHAN MEMORIAL SCHOOL** and **THE GREY COAT HOSPITAL SCHOOL**

Extra Chorus

Sopranos **CELESTE GATTAI, ALISON RAYNER, ROSALIND WATERS, TAMSIN DALLEY, MARIA JONES**

Mezzo-Soprano **JENNIFER WESTWOOD**

Tenors **ANDREW FRIEDHOFF, JONATHAN ENGLISH, ANDREW MACKENZIE-WICKS**

Basses **JAMES BIRCHALL, GAVIN HORSLEY, SIMON PREECE, JONATHAN WOOD**



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LOTTERY FUNDED

SYNOPSIS

The opera is set in Paris

ACT I: An attic in the Latin Quarter, Christmas Eve

Rodolfo and Marcello complain about the bitter cold. They need to light their stove: Marcello suggests using a chair, but Rodolfo offers the manuscript of the play he is writing. Colline arrives and the remaining acts of the play are burnt.

Schaunard arrives with wood, food and wine. He explains that an Englishman engaged him to play his violin to hasten the death of a parrot. The friends decide to go and eat in the Latin Quarter but are interrupted by Benoît, their landlord, who has come for the rent. They ply him with wine and Benoît boasts of his sexual prowess. The bohemians pretend outrage at Benoît's immorality and push him out.

Marcello, Colline and Schaunard head to Café Momus, leaving Rodolfo behind to finish an article. There is a knock at the door. It is a girl who asks for a light for her candle. She feels faint from climbing the stairs. As she is leaving her candle flickers out again and she realizes that she has lost her key. Rodolfo's candle also goes out and they search for her key in the moonlight. Rodolfo takes the girl's icy hand and tells her of his life as a poet. The girl tells him her name, Mimì, and describes her simple life as a flower embroiderer. Schaunard, Colline and Marcello shout up to Rodolfo to hurry. Mimì asks if she may join them at the Café Momus. Rodolfo suggests they might stay in, but eventually they leave together singing of their love.

ACT II: The Latin Quarter

Rodolfo and Mimì wander through the Christmas Eve crowds. Rodolfo introduces Mimì to his friends. When Mimì shows her new friends the bonnet Rodolfo has brought her, Marcello expresses cynicism about romance.

As they propose a toast, Marcello's ex-girlfriend Musetta appears, accompanied by Alcindoro, her rich admirer. Agitated at being ignored by Marcello, Musetta launches into a song – to provoke and seduce him. She complains of a painful foot and dispatches Alcindoro to buy new shoes. The bill for supper arrives, but the bohemians have already spent their money. Musetta places their bill on Alcindoro's plate. A marching band arrives, and the bohemians leave with Musetta. Alcindoro returns and is presented with the bill.

INTERVAL

ACT III: Outside the Barrière d'Enfer

Workers arrive from out of town to enter the city. From inside a tavern comes the voice of Musetta. Mimì enters, ill and racked with coughing. She asks for Marcello. He tells her that he and Musetta are now living at the inn and that Rodolfo turned up in the night. Mimì explains that Rodolfo's jealousy is destroying their relationship and he wants to leave her. Marcello advises Mimì to go, but she hides nearby.

Rodolfo comes out of the tavern and says he will break up with Mimì: her flirting has incensed him. Eventually, however, he reveals the real reason for their separation: she is so ill that his miserable poverty offers her nothing but the prospect of death. They hear Mimì crying and coughing. As Rodolfo hurries to her, Musetta's laugh is heard and Marcello goes to see what

she is doing. Mimì says farewell to Rodolfo and asks him to send on her possessions. She proposes that he keep her bonnet as a memento of their love. Marcello and Musetta quarrel and separate. Rodolfo and Mimì decide to postpone their separation until the spring.

ACT IV: The attic, autumn

Marcello and Rodolfo taunt each other about their ex-lovers: Rodolfo has seen Musetta in a fine carriage and Marcello has seen Mimì dressed like a queen. They pretend not to miss the girls but then admit that they do. Schaunard and Colline arrive with bread and a herring and the four eat and amuse each other.

Suddenly Musetta enters. She has brought Mimì, who is desperately ill: Musetta explains that she met her in the street and that Mimì begged to be taken to Rodolfo. Mimì rallies and greets the friends. Musetta instructs Marcello to sell her earrings to pay for medicine and a doctor. Colline leaves to pawn his coat. Mimì, alone with Rodolfo, expresses her boundless love for him. He shows her the bonnet and they reminisce about their first meeting. The others return with a muff and medicine, promising that a doctor will come. Mimì dies unnoticed while they are preparing her medicine. Colline arrives with money from the pawnbroker, but it is too late.

PRODUCTION

Music preparation **STEPHEN CLARKE, OLIVIA CLARKE, ANDRÉ CALLEGARO*, SUSANNA STRANDERS, MARK PACKWOOD, EDWARD REEVE***

Assistant Directors **BEN MILLS, DAISY BROWN, JOHANNES STEPANEK**

Language Coaches **VALERIA RACCO, EMMA ABBATE**

*Jette Parker Artist

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Patron **THE FORMER PRINCE OF WALES**

Music Director **SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO** *cvo*

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Director of Casting **PETER MARIO KATONA**

Administrative Director **CORMAC SIMMS**

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