



McGill



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P R E S S R E L E A S E

**Opera McGill presents Puccini's *La Bohème*
January 26, 28, 29, 30**

For immediate release

Montreal, January 7, 2011 – Opera McGill will present a new production of Puccini's best known opera *La Bohème* on Wednesday, January 26, Friday, January 28, Saturday, January 29 at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, January 30 at 2:30 p.m. in Pollack Hall. Tickets are \$27 adults/\$22 children, students and seniors. *La Bohème* is the second of three productions in this season of Opera McGill. Patrick Hansen, director of Opera McGill, Julian Wachner, conductor, Vincent Lefèvre, set designer, Ginette Grenier, costume designer, and Serge Filiatrault, lighting designer.

“Creating a new production of *Bohème* with my design collaborators, Vincent Lefèvre, Ginette Grenier and Serge Filiatrault, along with a new initiative to document the process of creating opera here at Schulich through video, is intensely satisfying for me as a teacher and as an artist,” says Patrick Hansen, Director of Opera McGill. This production will feature the less frequently heard full orchestration, and will be set in the late 1840's to early 1850's, à la Henri Murget *Scènes de la vie de bohème*, a work which was published in 1851 and served as the inspiration for Puccini's opera of 1896. “Conductor Julian Wachner and I collaborated on a semi-staged concert version of Act 2 at the Kennedy Center last year. He has a passion for Puccini that matches my own. We both approach the score from a ‘come scritto’ standpoint, but understand that it's the personal artistic choices a singer makes which create a memorable and exciting musical and dramatic evening for the audience.”

The opera's principal roles will be double-cast. “*Bohème* is my favorite opera, and the casts that have been assembled for the Opera McGill production are the strongest I've ever worked with here at Schulich,” according to Hansen. During the second act, with the orchestra, chorus, children's chorus, supers and cast, there will be over 100 students on stage.

About *La Bohème*: Puccini's beloved opera was premiered in February 1896 by Arturo Toscanini and instantly became part of the standard Italian opera repertory. The libretto was written by Luigi Illica, who also wrote the libretti for *Tosca*, *Manon Lescaut* and *Madama Butterfly*. Two Bohemians living in Paris, Rodolfo and Marcello, the poet and the painter. It is Christmas Eve and not a night of celebration for the pair - at least until their friends Colline and Schaunard turn up. Schaunard has money and food and wants to share his good fortune from a job with his friends. They agree to head off to the Latin Quarter to indulge in the excitement there. However, before Rodolfo leaves, his next door neighbour Mimi arrives on the doorstep looking for someone to relight her candles. Rodolfo has been a long-time admirer and the two fall in love. The happy couple head off to the Latin Quarter to join their friends at a restaurant. Enjoying the evening, the fun is interrupted by the appearance of Musetta, a former flame of Marcello's. Determined to force him to renew their relationship, she eventually succeeds. A few months later Marcello and Musetta are still together, eking out an existence at a tavern near one of the gates into Paris. Mimi seeks out Marcello to enlist his help in her relationship with Rodolfo. She knows he loves her, but seems to shy away from her with jealousy. Marcello connives to get Rodolfo to express his true feelings whilst Mimi hides nearby to hear all. Mimi

resolves to terminate the relationship, and Marcello breaks up with Musetta. In the final act Rodolfo and Marcello are back at the attic when Musetta returns with consumptive Mimi. Whilst their friends attempt to get a doctor, Mimi dies in the arms of Rodolfo having confessed their true love for each other.

Pollack Hall is located at 555 Sherbrooke Street West.

The Box office, located in the Pollack Hall lobby, is open from 12 noon to 6 pm Monday to Friday, and one hour before each performance. Tickets are also available by phone at 514.398.4547

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