



*International  
Presentations of  
Music & Dance*

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

NY  
CITY OPERA NATIONAL COMPANY

CHRISTOPHER KEENE, *General Director*

NANCY KELLY, *Administrative Director*

MARK GIBSON, *Music Director*

SATURDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 17, 1990, AT 8:00

SUNDAY AFTERNOON & EVENING, FEBRUARY 18, 1990, AT 2:00 & 8:00

POWER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

**La Bohème**

World première: February 1, 1896, Teatro Regio, Turin

*Music by* GIACOMO PUCCINI

*Libretto by* GIUSEPPE GIACOSA and LUIGI ILlica

Based on a novel by Henri Murger, *Scenes de la vie de Bohème*

*Conducted by*

MARK GIBSON (Sat. & Sun. eve) and WILLIAM ROBERTSON (Sun. mat.)

*Directed by* PATRICK BAKMAN

*Scenery designed by* LLOYD EVANS

*Costumes by* MALABAR, LTD.

*Lighting designed by* WILLIAM D. ANDERSON

*English supertitles by* SONYA FRIEDMAN

Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème* is the touching, tragic story of the lives and loves of four impoverished artists living on Paris' Left Bank in the early nineteenth century. The story unfolds in a series of revealing vignettes as the high-spirited bohemians share good times and bad, laughing at misfortune, and rejoicing in the lively Parisian cafés. At the center of the drama stand the poet, Rodolfo, and the seamstress, Mimi, who meet, fall in love, and share a few brief moments of bittersweet passion before death claims the sickly young woman. In contrast to this scene of poignant devotion is the on-again, off-again romance of the painter, Marcello, and the fickle, flirtatious Musetta.

The joys and sorrows of this bohemian band, depicted in a series of literary sketches by French novelist Henri Murger, are captured superbly in Puccini's sumptuous music. Premiering in 1896 to an enthusiastic audience, *La Bohème* is the first in the trio of celebrated Puccini operas that includes *Tosca* (1900) and *Madama Butterfly* (1904). While *Madama Butterfly* was booed at its première and *Tosca* condemned by the critics, *La Bohème* was generally well received from the start. Its masterful blending of story and music has placed it among the most popular operas of all time.

*Sunday afternoon's pre-concert carillon recital performed by John Kane, a graduate student in organ and a carillon student of Margo Halsted, University Carillonneur.*



## Cast of Characters

(in order of vocal appearance)

*Marcello* ..... Jeffrey Blaine Kneebone (eves), James Busterud (mat.)  
*Rodolfo* ..... Martin Thompson (eves), José Medina (mat.)  
*Colline* ..... Brian Jauhainen (eves), Matthew Lau (mat.)  
*Schaunard* ..... Steven Aiken (eves), Gregory Powell (mat.)  
*Benoit* ..... Thomas Hammons (all)  
*Mimi* ..... Geraldine McMillian (eves), Michèle Boucher (mat.)  
*Musetta* ..... Joan Gibbons (eves), Jamie Baer (mat.)  
*Alcindoro* ..... Thomas Hammons (all)  
Students, citizens, street vendors ..... Jane Braun, Jennifer Bodenweber,  
Julie A. DeSollar, Neil Eddinger, Dale Ganz, Carole Latimer,  
Nancy Lillis, José Medina (eves only), Michael P. Mendelsohn,  
Janet Paone, Georgina Pujol, Kay Schoenfeld,  
James Scott Sikon, Connor Smith, Mariano Viñuales, George Wyman

*Place:* Paris, France      *Time:* circa 1830

**Act I:** An attic room on the Left Bank; Christmas Eve

**Act II:** The Café Momus; immediately thereafter

*Intermission*

**Act III:** A tollgate on the outskirts of Paris; two months later; dawn

*Intermission*

**Act IV:** The attic room, the following spring

## Synopsis

**Act I:** An attic room on Paris' Left Bank; Christmas Eve, 1830

Rodolfo, a poet, and Marcello, a painter, rail against the cold as they work in their garret room. They decide to kindle a fire with the pages of Rodolfo's latest play, and Colline, their philosopher roommate, arrives just in time to enjoy the brief moment of warmth. The fourth member of the household, the musician Schaunard, bursts in, loaded with provisions. His friends, occupied with their new-found bounty, ignore his animated account of how he earned these riches. Cursing their ingratitude, he demands that they dine out, for today is Christmas Eve.

Before the men can leave, however, they are confronted by Benoit, their sinister, slum landlord, who brandishes the overdue rent bill. Marcello cleverly entices the fellow into confessing to an adulterous affair, and, pretending to be scandalized, the bohemians throw Benoit out—without the rent money. Marcello, Colline, and Schaunard finally depart, leaving Rodolfo behind to finish some writing.

A knock at the door cuts short the poet's efforts. He admits a young woman who explains that her candle has been extinguished in the drafty hallway. A coughing spell weakens her, and she collapses into a chair, dropping her room key. As she revives, she relights her candle and turns to go, but soon discovers that she has lost her key. Her candle goes out again, as does Rodolfo's, leaving the room in darkness. The poet and his companion search for the key, which he finds and slips silently into his pocket. Reaching for the young woman's hand, he tells her about himself in the aria, *Che gelida manina* (Your little hand is frozen). *Mi chiamano Mimi* (They call me Mimi), replies the woman, describing her simple life as a seamstress. Rodolfo and Mimi declare their love in the duet, *O soave fanciulla* (O gentle maiden), and leave to join the other bohemians as Act I comes to an end.

**Act II:** The Café Momus; immediately thereafter

Around the Café Momus, all is festive and bustling. Rodolfo buys Mimi a pink bonnet, then introduces her to his friends. As the group settles down to enjoy the meal, there is a great commotion as Musetta arrives with the old and wealthy Alcindoro in tow. Marcello and Musetta have been lovers, and the flirtatious young woman does her best to arouse the painter's jealousy, launching into the seductive *Quando m'en vo* (When I pass by). In order to get rid of Alcindoro, Musetta wails that her shoe is too tight, and sends him off for another pair.

As soon as the old man is gone, Musetta and Marcello fall into each other's arms. The waiter arrives with the check, but the bohemians discover that their money has run out. No matter, says Musetta, instructing the waiter to give the check to Alcindoro. The happy group marches off to a rousing fanfare, leaving Alcindoro with an enormous bill.



Act III: The Barrière d'Enfer, a tollgate on the outskirts of Paris; two months later

In the wintry dawn light, street sweepers and milk vendors make their way through the tollgate. Mimi appears, and sends a woman into the nearby inn to fetch Marcello, who soon joins her. Upon learning that Rodolfo is in the tavern, Mimi refuses to go inside, telling Marcello that in a fit of jealousy, Rodolfo has left her. But Mimi implores him to speak with his friend on her behalf. Reluctantly, Marcello agrees, sending Mimi away as he discovers that Rodolfo is about to enter the courtyard. As the poet comes outside, Mimi returns and hides in order to overhear the conversation.

Rodolfo declares that he can no longer tolerate Mimi's flirting with other men, but Marcello detects a note of insincerity. At last, the poet confesses that he loves Mimi so desperately that he cannot bear to watch her life slip away in his cold, drafty garret. He has pretended to quarrel with her in the hope that she will leave him for a wealthy lover who will take better care of her. Suddenly, Mimi is seized by a fit of coughing, and Rodolfo discovers that she has heard everything. Musetta's wild laughter rings out from the tavern, and Marcello, certain that she is flirting, runs off to investigate.

Alone with her lover, Mimi bids him farewell in the aria, *Donde lieta uscì* (Where happily I left). She and Rodolfo begin a duet, lamenting the sadness of parting in winter, and as they decide to postpone their separation till spring, their voices are joined by those of Marcello and Musetta, who are fighting once again. As Mimi and Rodolfo sadly leave together, Musetta's parting vindictive barbs bring the act to a close.

Act IV: The attic room of Rodolfo and his companions; the following spring

Rodolfo and Marcello struggle in vain to keep their minds on their work and off Mimi and Musetta, who have both taken rich new lovers. *O Mimi, tu più non torni* (O Mimi, you will never return), sings the poet, beginning a duet filled with longing. Schaunard and Colline arrive with a scanty supper. In order to forget their empty stomachs, the bohemians indulge in some spirited horseplay, which ends abruptly when Musetta comes in to announce that Mimi is outside, too weak to go any farther.

As her sick friend is carried in and made comfortable, Musetta explains that Mimi has returned to die in the arms of her beloved Rodolfo. Taking Marcello aside, Musetta instructs him to sell her earrings and use the money to send a doctor; she herself will go to buy Mimi a muff to warm her hands. Colline resolves to pawn his overcoat, bidding it a solemn farewell in the aria, *Vecchia zimarra* (Old coat), then leaves with Schaunard.

Alone together at last, Mimi and Rodolfo reaffirm their love. The poet produces the bonnet he once bought for her, and they reminisce about the day they met. As Mimi begins to cough, Schaunard returns and looks on anxiously with Rodolfo. Musetta arrives, accompanied by Marcello, and gives Mimi the muff as a gift from Rodolfo. Content, Mimi falls asleep. Rodolfo goes over to confer with Marcello, while Musetta, warming some medicine over a candle flame, prays for her friend's recovery. Soon Schaunard discovers that Mimi is dead, and he whispers the news to Marcello. When Colline returns, Rodolfo tells him that Mimi is resting, but the poet is alarmed by his companions' grim expressions. "Courage," urges Marcello. Realizing that Mimi is dead, Rodolfo falls over her lifeless body as the opera reaches its tragic conclusion.

### About the Artists

Achieving what its name implies, the **New York City Opera National Company** travels to all corners of the nation. Each production is specially designed to showcase the creativity and energy of America's best new singers, instrumentalists, and designers, many of whom go on to enjoy successful careers with major opera houses around the world. A National Company tour is also the ideal environment for veteran singers who wish to develop a new role and perfect its characterization with repeated performances under a wide variety of conditions.

Founded in 1979 by Beverly Sills, the National Company is now directed by Christopher Keene. Under his guidance, the 1990 tour of *La Bohème* covers 24 states in ten weeks, with a performing ensemble that includes a 29-piece orchestra, 15 soloists, 16 choristers, and a staff of 15. As in previous years, the production displays the company's popular and much-praised supertitles while the singers preserve the integrity of the original language libretto, in this case, Italian.

The NYCO National Company now makes its fifth visit to Ann Arbor, after *Rigoletto* (1985), *Madama Butterfly* (1987), *The Barber of Seville* (1988), and *La Traviata* (1989). To meet the increasing audience demand over the years, this production receives three performances. In addition, the Musical Society has arranged for the company to present two specially designed one-hour abbreviated performances on Monday for fourth grade students of Ann Arbor and surrounding communities, with the anticipation that this feature will become an annual event.



**Christopher Keene** succeeds Beverly Sills this year as general director of the New York City Opera. His long association with the company spans twenty years — as conductor, music director, artistic supervisor, and now general director. While still a student at the University of California, Berkeley, he organized his own opera company and staged several modern works. He has been music director of the American Ballet Company, the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, and the Long Island Philharmonic.

**Mark Gibson**, in his first season as music director of the NYCO National Company, began his affiliation with City Opera in 1983. As a conducting fellow at the Tanglewood Festival, he worked with Seiji Ozawa, Leonard Bernstein, and Gustav Meier, and earned his master's degree at The University of Michigan, studying with Meier. A Minnesota native, he recently conducted concerts with the Minnesota Orchestra and, following this tour, will lead a new production of *Romeo and Juliet* with the Minnesota Opera. He has also conducted opera companies in Spain.

**William Robertson** (Associate Conductor) also received his master's degree in the U-M conducting program under Gustav Meier. While in Ann Arbor, he was assistant conductor of the University Choral Union for two years and conducted the University Symphony Orchestra on tour in the United States and Europe. The current National Company tour marks his third consecutive Ann Arbor appearance with the National Company, after conducting *The Barber of Seville* and last year, *La Traviata*. Following the tour, he will conduct Eugene Opera's production of *Rigoletto* in April.

**Patrick Bakman** (Director) began his affiliation with New York City Opera during the 1972 season with Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* and directed subsequent productions of *Carmen*, *La Traviata*, *The Magic Flute*, *Delius' A Village Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, including the 1976 "Live from Lincoln Center" telecast. The Georgetown University graduate recently completed *Tosca* at Artpark and *La Traviata* at Seattle Opera, with upcoming engagements including *The Bartered Bride* with Hawaii Opera Theater and *Faust* at Chautauqua Opera. He marks his debut with the National Company in this production of *La Bohème*.

**Lloyd Evans** (Set Designer) created over 23 productions for the New York City Opera during the last 24 years, and National Company audiences saw his set designs on the *La Bohème* (1984), *Carmen*, and *The Barber of Seville* tours. His additional credits include the world premiere of Hoiby's *Summer and Smoke* at the St. Paul Opera and the American premieres of Britten's *Curlew River*, *Burning Fiery Furnace*, and *The Prodigal Son* for New York's Caramoor Festival. Mr. Evans died in 1989, and this tour is dedicated to his memory.

**William Anderson** (Lighting Designer), a graduate design faculty member of Brandeis University, returns to the National Company in *La Bohème* after *The Barber of Seville* for the 1988 tour. Recognized for his work in off-Broadway productions, regional theater, dance, and opera, he recently was assistant designer for Broadway's *The Merchant of Venice*. He also designed the Boston North Shore Music Theatre productions of *La Cage aux Folles*, *A Chorus Line*, and *Oklahoma*, as well as national tours of *South Pacific* and *Camelot*.

**Martin Thompson** (Rodolfo, eves) returns for his second season with the National Company, after performing Alfredo in *La Traviata* last year. He most recently appeared at Ireland's Wexford Festival in Mozart's *Mitridate*, and has also sung the title role of *Faust* with Milwaukee's Florentine Opera, Tamino in *The Magic Flute* with Virginia Opera, and Rinuccio in the Metropolitan Opera Guild's production of *Gianni Schicchi*. Additional credits include Armand in *Thérèse* for the Boston Lyric Opera, Rodolfo for the New York Grand Opera, and Camille in *The Merry Widow* for Lake George Opera.

**José Medina** (Rodolfo, mat.), a native of Mexico, has recently returned from Italy where he performed Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and Arturo in *I Puritani* with the Bel Canto Foundation Seminar. Prior to this, his first season with the National Company, he has performed with Comite de Arte Lirico in Mexico City, Dayton Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Opera Pacific, and the Pittsburgh Opera Center. Among roles in his repertory are Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville*, Tonio in *La Fille du Regiment*, and Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

**Geraldine McMillian** (Mimi, eves) appears for the first time with the company on this tour, following her recent engagement in the same role for Opera North in Philadelphia. She has frequently portrayed Bess, Clara, and Annie in *Porgy and Bess*, with additional credits including the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, and Violetta in *La Traviata*. Equally at home on the concert stage, she has performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Columbus, Virginia, and New Haven Symphonies.

**Michèle Boucher** (Mimi, mat.) makes her National Company debut in this production of *La Bohème*, having debuted previously with the New York City Opera as Micaela in *Carmen*. She has also portrayed Marguerite in *Faust* and has appeared in *Lakmé* and *Herodiade* with the Opera Orchestra of New York at Carnegie Hall. As recitalist and soloist with symphony orchestras, she has performed with the Columbus Symphony and with several orchestras in her native Canada. She can be heard on a CBC Enterprises compact disc release of Viennese music.



**Jeffrey Blaine Kneebone** (Marcello, eves) appears for the first time with the National Company in *La Bohème*. He made his debut with the Pennsylvania Opera Theater in *Rigoletto* and returned to appear as Thomas Putnam in Ward's *The Crucible*. Other credits include Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, Sid in *Albert Herring*, and John Sorel in *The Consul*. He has performed with the Chautauqua Opera, Opera Delaware, Temple University Opera Theatre, and the Stony Brook Opera Ensemble. He was recently named a prizewinner in the Washington International Competition and a finalist in the Pavarotti Competition.

**James Busterud** (Marcello, mat.) made his New York City Opera debut as Silvio in *Pagliacci* during the 1987 season and now joins the National Company for this tour. Last season, he debuted at the Metropolitan Opera in Britten's *Billy Budd*, at Boston Opera as Schaunard, and at Tulsa Opera as *Silvio*. He has also performed with the companies of Baltimore, Sarasota, and Santa Fe, and has sung in concert with the San Francisco Symphony and the Minnesota Orchestra.

**Joan Gibbons** (Musetta, eves) made her New York City Opera debut last season as Gilda in *Rigoletto* and this year appears for the first time with the National Company. She has fulfilled several engagements with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and has sung with the companies of San Francisco, Milwaukee, Seattle, St. Louis, and Dallas. She has also performed with the Chicago Symphony, Chicago's Grant Park Symphony, and the Harwood Early Music Consort. Upcoming engagements include her European debut as Pamina in *The Magic Flute* in Nice, France.

**Jamie Baer** (Musetta, mat.) debuts with the NYCO National Company in *La Bohème*. A former apprentice with Chicago's Lyric Opera Center of American Artists, she has performed with the Santa Fe Opera, the Virginia Opera, and the Minnesota Opera. She has also appeared as soloist with the New York City Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, and Chicago's Grant Park Symphony, as well as in a broadcast with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and a *Messiah* performance with the Utah Oratorio Society.

#### New York City Opera National Company Orchestra

<i>Violins</i>	<i>Bass</i>	<i>French Horns</i>
Dale Chao, Concertmaster	Martha Cox	Donna Dolson, Principal
Alice Bodnar, Principal Second	<i>Flutes</i>	John Aubrey
Karen Banos	Peter Ader, Principal	<i>Trumpets</i>
Kathleen Dillon	Linda Ganus	Kenneth De Carlo, Principal
Kristin Knudsen	<i>Piccolo</i>	John Sheppard
Jenny Lind Nilsson	Linda Ganus	<i>Trombone</i>
Mary Stephenson	<i>Oboe</i>	Christopher Lucas
James Tsao	Linda Kaplan	<i>Timpani</i>
Vivian Wolf	<i>Clarinets</i>	James Thoma
<i>Violas</i>	Barbara Koostra, Principal	<i>Percussion</i>
Henry Kao, Principal	Janet Greene	Clifton J. Hardison
David Lennon	<i>Bassoon</i>	<i>Harp</i>
<i>Cellos</i>	Stephen Wisner	Amy Berger
Daniel McIntosh, Principal		
Daniele Doctorow		
Peter Howard		

This tour of *La Bohème* is dedicated to the memory of Lloyd Evans.

#### New York City Opera National Company Staff

Colman Rupp, Production Manager; Karen Cerreta, Assistant to the Administrative Director; Patricia S. Exstein, Tour Facilitator; James Festa, Company Manager; Carol Clark, Production Stage Manager; William Robertson, Associate Conductor; James McWilliams, Master Carpenter; Stephen Snyder, Master Electrician; Rolf Lee, Master of Properties; Jenny-King Turco, Principal Makeup/Wigmaster; Amy Arnold, Wardrobe Mistress; Laura Hassell, Assistant Stage Manager; John Harrison, Assistant Electrician; Karen Cerreta, Supertitle Coordinator; Jeremy Kumin, Assistant to the Lighting Designer; John Beeson, Rehearsal Accompanist

Support for the National Company's activities is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, IBM Corporation, and GTE Foundation. Lighting equipment supplied by BASH Theatrical Lighting, Inc. Scenery restored and painted by Theater Machines, Inc.

Special funding for City Opera's supertitles projection system has been provided through the generous support of Manufacturers Hanover Corporation.

*New York City Opera National Company is represented by Columbia Artists Management Inc.*

Cameras and recording devices are not allowed in the auditorium.



## **“Desert Island Discs” — A New Program on Michigan Radio**

Co-produced by the University Musical Society and Michigan Radio, “Desert Island Discs” is heard every Saturday morning from 8:00 a.m. to 10 a.m., each program featuring a distinguished local “castaway” guest who is asked, “If you were stranded on a desert island, which five recordings would you like to have with you and (perhaps most revealingly) why?”

Feb. 24 — Elsa Kircher Cole, U-M General Counsel

Mar. 3 — Nicholas Delbanco, Award-winning author, U-M Prof. of English

WUOM-FM (91.7, Ann Arbor), WFUM-FM (91.1, Flint), WVGR-FM (104.1, Grand Rapids)

## **Coming Concerts**

Borodin String Quartet .....	Sun. Feb. 25
Maurizio Pollini, <i>pianist</i> .....	Fri. Mar. 9
Contemporary American Dance Festival .....	Mon.-Fri. Mar. 12-16
Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra .....	Sat. Mar. 17
Dmitri Kitaenko, <i>conductor</i> ; Vladimir Krainev, <i>pianist</i>	
Thomas Allen, <i>baritone</i> .....	Wed. Mar. 21
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra .....	Sun. Mar. 25
David Zinman, <i>conductor</i> ; Isaac Stern, <i>violinist</i>	
Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields / Iona Brown .....	Sun. Apr. 1
The Feld Ballet .....	Wed., Thurs. Apr. 4, 5

## **97th Annual May Festival — May 9-12, 1990**

### **Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor, 8:00 p.m.**

Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra

André Previn, *Guest Conductor and Pianist*

The Festival Chorus

Hei-Kyung Hong, *Soprano*      Richard Stilwell, *Baritone*

*Wednesday* — Gershwin: Piano Concerto in F; Rachmaninoff: Symphony No. 2

*Thursday* — John Harbison: Concerto for Brass Choir and Orchestra; Mahler: Symphony No. 4,  
with Hei-Kyung Hong

*Friday* — Beethoven: Symphony No. 4; Shostakovich: Symphony No. 4

*Saturday* — All-Brahms: “Tragic” Overture; “A German Requiem,” for Chorus, Orchestra,  
and Soloists

## **Pre-concert Presentations**

*All presentations free of charge, in the Rackham Building one hour before the concert.*

Sunday, Feb. 25, preceding Borodin String Quartet

Natalie Challis, Lecturer in Slavic Languages and Literatures, U-M

Friday, Mar. 16, preceding American Contemporary Dance Festival Final Concert

Debra Cash, Dance Critic, The Boston Globe

Saturday, Mar. 17, preceding Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra

Roland Wiley, Assoc. Prof. of Music, U-M

Wednesday, Mar. 21, preceding Thomas Allen, baritone

Martin Katz, Prof. of Music in Accompanying, U-M

## **University Musical Society Board of Directors**

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## **UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY**

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