

SJSU CONCERTS



- ✦ Friday, Nov. 14: Collegium Musicum
- ✦ Wed. Nov. 19: Keyboard Ensemble
- ✦ Friday, Nov. 21: Katherine Petersen Graduate Voice Recital
- ✦ Saturday, Nov. 22: Alexander Etherington Junior Piano Recital
- ✦ Monday, Nov. 24: Men's and Women's Glee Club Concert

SJSU CONCERTS



- ✦ Thurs. Dec. 4: Wind Ensemble Concert
- ✦ Fri. Dec. 5: Symphony Orchestra Concert
- ✦ Sat. Dec. 6: Shihhuai Chen Junior Piano Recital (4:30);
Sat. Dec. 6: Veronica Christie Senior Trombone Recital (7:30)
- ✦ Sat Dec. 6: Choir Concert, Mission Santa Clara (7:30)
- ✦ Sun, Dec. 7: Anne Hsu Senior Percussion Recital

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- ✦ Monday, Dec. 8: Symphonic Band Concert
 - ✦ Tuesday, Dec. 9: Voice Fundamentals Recital
 - ✦ Fri. Dec, 12: Opera Workshop Theatre Concert

OPERA at the MOVIES



- ✦ Camera 3 Entertainment, 288 S. Second Street, San Jose
- ✦ Sunday 12 noon, Tuesday 7:15 PM
- ✦ Nov. 23, 25: *Il Trovatore*
- ✦ Dec. 14, 16: *La Cenerentola*



Bohemians:
Puccini's *La Bohème*

Giacomo Puccini



Giacomo Puccini



- ✦ 1858-1924
- ✦ Born in Lucca, Tuscany
- ✦ Comes from a musical family working for the Cathedral of Lucca since the eighteenth century

Giacomo Puccini

- ✦ Attends the Conservatorio di Milano



- ✦ His earliest compositions are religious

Giacomo Puccini



- ✦ After graduating his teachers suggest that he **try writing OPERA**, the most important musical genre in Italy
- ✦ Puccini writes *Le Villi* with librettist Ferdinando Fontana in 1883 (Puccini is 25) for a **music competition for one-act operas** sponsored by the **Sozogno** publishing company

Ferdinando
Fontana

Giacomo
Puccini



Giacomo Puccini

- ✦ Puccini **doesn't win**, but the opera is a **success** when produced
- ✦ **Giulio Ricordi**, head of another music publishing company, decides to **commission an opera** from Puccini



Giulio Ricordi



- ✦ Puccini's first opera for the Ricordi company is *Edgar* (1884), again with librettist Fontana

Giacomo Puccini



- ✦ *Edgar* is **not a success**, and many blamed the opera's libretto
- ✦ Puccini's working relationship with Ricordi is complicated by the social scandal of Puccini's elopement with one of his piano students, **Elvira Gemignani**

Elvira Gemignani



Giacomo Puccini



- ✦ The Board of Directors of the Ricordi company, who are financially supporting Puccini, ask Giulio Ricordi to stop Puccini's stipend
- ✦ Ricordi decides to give Puccini **one more chance**

Giacomo Puccini



- ✦ Puccini decides to turn the 1731 book *Manon Lescaut* by the French writer Abbé Prévost into an opera
- ✦ Novel concerns the love of a nobleman for the courtesan Manon
- ✦ Over **four different writers**—including Puccini himself—worked on writing the libretto
- ✦ The two writers that complete the libretto are **Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa**



MANON LESCAUT

DRAMMA
LIRICO

DI G. Puccini

MILANO - EDIZIONE G. RICORDI & C.
PUBBLICITÀ RICORDI



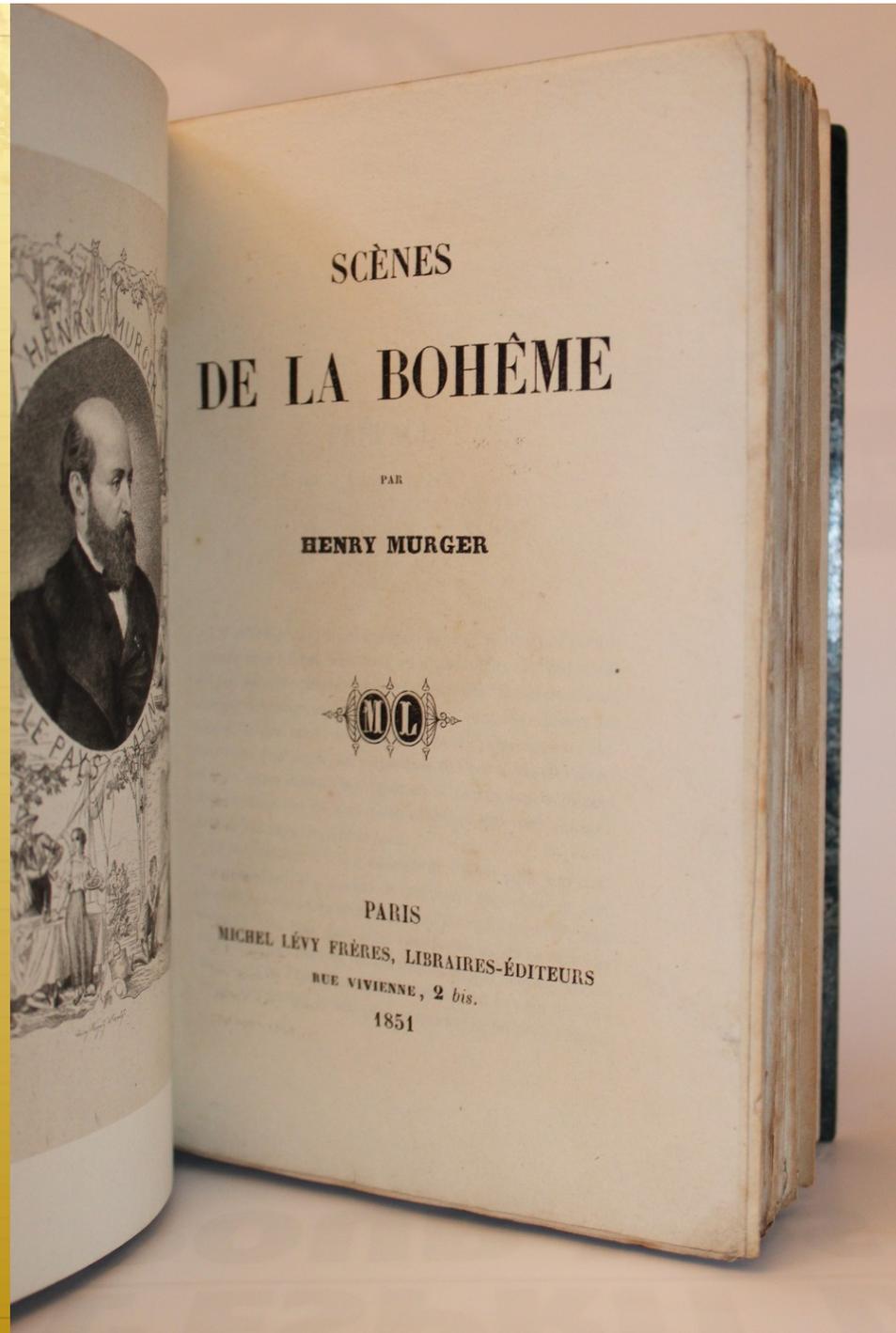
Poster depicting Manon's death at the end of the opera

Giacomo Puccini



- ✦ *Manon Lescaut* is a **huge success** with both the audience and critics
- ✦ Puccini works with the writing team of Illica and Giacosa on his **next three projects**, including his next opera—*LA BOHÈME*

✦ *La Bohème* is based on a collection of episodic stories, *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème* (1851), by French author Henri Murger

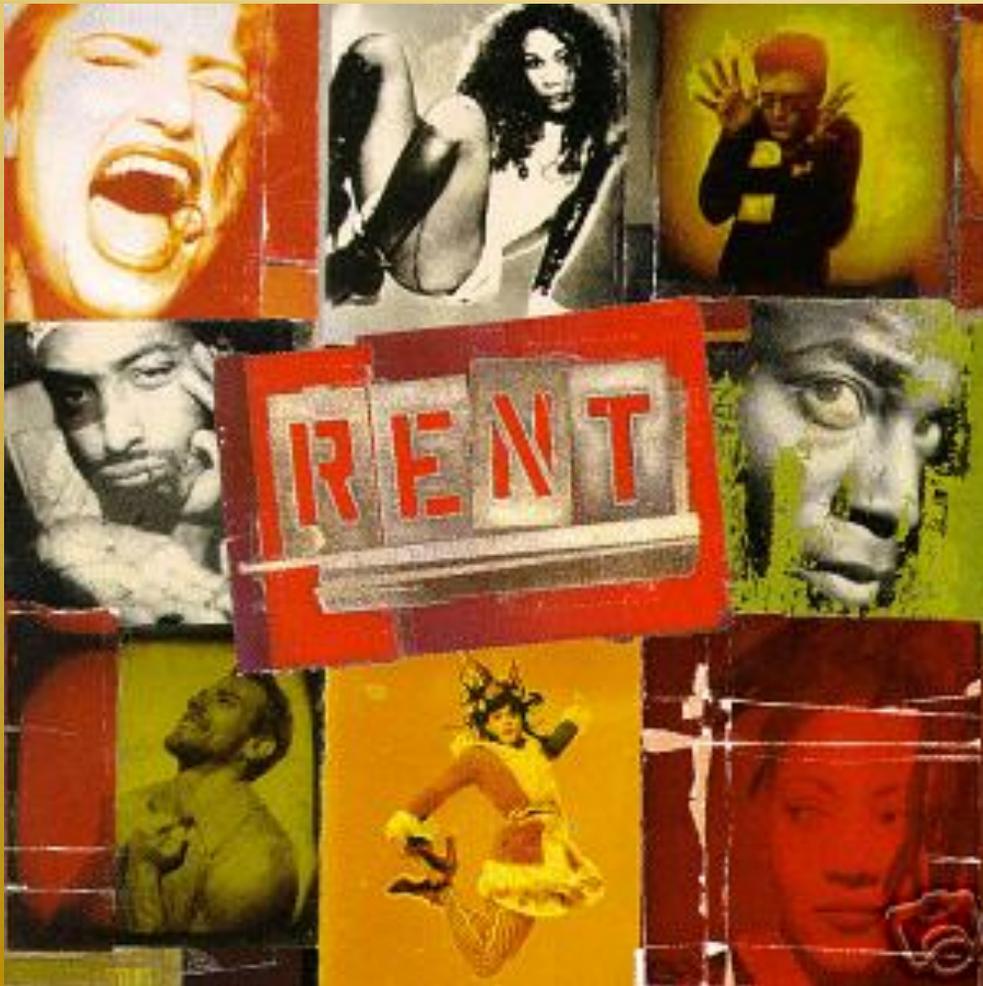


La Bohème



- ✦ The stories are set in the **Latin quarter of Paris** in the 1840s and trace the lives of a **group of freelance artists**
- ✦ While the libretto is based on Murger's stories, a great deal of the opera's story was **made up by the librettists** and from **Puccini's experiences** as a poor student at the Milan Conservatory
- ✦ Puccini wrote, "**I lived *La Bohème*.**"

La Bohème



- ✦ Jonathan Larson based his 1994 musical **RENT** on *La Bohème*

La Bohème

- ✦ While there is a **country of Bohemia** in central Europe (now a region of the Czech Republic), the term was used in nineteenth-century France for the **Romani gypsies** who emigrated to France from Bohemia

La Bohème

- ✦ The term “**Bohemian**” was then used to describe people who lived an **unconventional lifestyle**, and whose outlook was **anti-establishment...**
- ✦ And “persons with **artistic or intellectual tendencies**, who live and act with no regard for conventional rules of behavior”

La Bohème



- ✦ Many “Bohemians” were **artists, writers, and freethinkers**
- ✦ One of the defining characteristics of the “Bohemian” lifestyle was **free love and poverty**

La Bohème

- ✦ The opera tries to deal in a **realistic way** with the lives of everyday people
- ✦ This kind of realism was an artistic movement in Italy called **VERISMO**
- ✦ VERISMO = **REALISM** (*Vero* = true)

La Bohème

- ✦ Various nineteenth-century writers, such as French novelist Émile Zola and Guy de Maupassant, became interested in **writing about life the way that it really was**—including bad social conditions, poverty, violence, industry and work--instead the movers and shakers of history or the romance of mythical subjects

La Bohème

- ✦ Such writing usually depicted life in **the lower classes, especially life in the densely populated cities**
- ✦ Luigi Capuana describes it as the “**poetry of the real**”

La Bohème



- ✦ Many opera composers became interested in such “real life” stories, and created a **new style of music** composition to represent such realism
- ✦ Most of these composers were young Italians, and were referred to as the “**giovane scuola**” [young school] during the years 1875-1895

La Bohème



- ✦ The opera is set in the “Latin” quarter of Paris

TAKE A SCROLL
THROUGH THE
LATIN QUARTER

RIGHT BANK

Point Zero in France
Notre Dame Cathedral



LEFT BANK



- M St.-Michel**
- La Boucherie*—in winter get a table by the fireplace
- Musée de Cluny*—a former monk's quarters located atop Roman baths that now holds French Medieval art
- M Maubert-Mutualité**
- Le Balzar*—Camus and Sartre had their last argument in this literary brasserie
- La Sorbonne*—sign up for a crash course in French at Paris' most famous university, or go to Richelieu's tomb on 21 October or 4 December and wait for his red hat to drop from the ceiling
- Parisians find the sounds of Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, and other American jazz greats at *Crocojazz*
- Voltaire, Rousseau, and Victor Hugo lie in the rather depressing crypt of the *Pantheon*
- Le Bistrot de la Nouvelle Mairie*—enjoy a glass of Beaujolais or Gamay outdoors at one of the city's finest wine bars

On 26 December 1898, Pierre and Marie Curie discovered radium in a ramshackle lab at the Sorbonne School of Physics and Chemistry
The market at rue Mouffetard (The Best in Paris)

St. Medard Cathedral

8, Ave des Gobelins

81, Blvd. Saint-Marcel

- M Gare d'Austerlitz**
- M Jussieu**
- Old Roman Arena*—the benches make this a good picnic spot
- M Monge**
- France's oldest mosque features mosaics, pink marble fountains, Turkish baths, and sweet mint tea
- In 1938 workers found 3,351 22-karat gold coins hidden in the wall at addresses 51 to 55 Rue Mouffetard
- M Censier-Daubenton**
- The colorful, open-air *Mouffetard Market* (a shopping site since 1352) begins here next to the street's best café, *Brasserie Mouffetard*, where the Chartrain family bakes croissants, brochets, and fruit tarts daily
- On weekend afternoons an old organ grinder cranks out traditional French chansons
- M Gobelins**

The Latin Quarter

Map Courtesy of
PARIS ACCESS

By Richard Saul Wurman
HarperPerennial
(I highly recommend this book)





La Bohème

- ✦ Rodolfo and his friends live in a *chambres de bonnes*—a “garrett”



Chambres de
bonnes

La Bohème



- ✦ Typically, opera is divided into **two different kind of sections**
- ✦ **RECITATIVE**: a very “**talky**” style of singing, where the **action** of dialogue takes place
- ✦ **ARIA**: the more “**tuneful**” section, where a character **expresses an emotional reaction** to a situation

RECITATIVE

Action
Dialogue



ARIA

Emotional
Reaction

La Bohème

- ✦ While there are “arias” in *verismo* operas, in general composers tried for more **on-going flow** of music
- ✦ The line between recitative and aria are **blurred**
- ✦ Many times **multiple characters sing at the same time**
- ✦ Lead characters are often placed in crowds, the the crowds acting as a realistic **background to the solo singing**

La Bohème



- ✦ The story of the opera concerns the loves stories of two couples:
 - ✦ **RODOLFO**, a poet, and **MIMÌ**, a seamstress
 - ✦ **MARCELLO**, a painter, and **MUSETTA**, a singer
- & Rodolfo's friends
- ✦ **COLLINE**, a philosopher; **SCHAUNARD**, a musician



La Bohème

ACT I

Introduction and Opening Scene

La Bohème



- ✦ Instrumental opening based on Puccini's *Capriccio Sinfonico*, written when he was a student—another connection to Puccini's Bohemian days
- ✦ Act I is in **two sections**
 - ✦ **First** a depiction of the artistic Bohemian lifestyle of Rodolfo, Marcello and their friends
 - ✦ **Second**, a duet for Rodolfo and Mimì as they meet and fall in love

La Bohème

- ✦ Rodolfo's and Mimì's duet is constructed of **four sections**
 - ✦ 1. Introduction, where they meet
 - ✦ 2. **Aria by Rodolfo, where he describes himself**
 - ✦ 3. **Aria by Mimì, where she describes herself**
 - ✦ 4. Concluding duet together



La Bohème

ACT I

* Rodolfo's aria, "Che gelida manina"





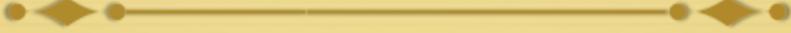
La Bohème

ACT I

*Mimi's aria, "Si chiamano Mimi"

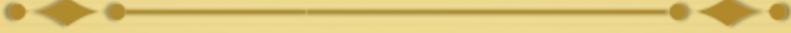


La Bohème



- ✦ Act III concerns Rodolfo and Mimí's breakup
- ✦ In the central duet, Rodolfo describes how he is very worried about **Mimí's health**—she has consumption (TB)
- ✦ Rodolfo wants Mimí to leave him so she can live with a wealthier boyfriend who can take care of her financially
- ✦ Rodolfo and Mimí **end their relationship**, agreeing to remain friends (“addio senza rancor”)

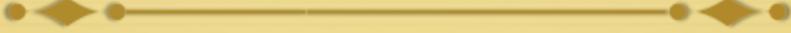
La Bohème



- ✦ In Act IV, Mimí returns to Rodolfo
- ✦ Sensing the worse, all her friend's turn up
- ✦ Rodolfo and Mimí recall their past relationship
- ✦ The opera ends with Mimí's death



Pieces to Know



- ✦ “Che gelida manina,” *La Bohème* Track 100 (*111 Opera Masterpieces*)
- ✦ “Si chiamano Mimì,” *La Bohème*, Track 83 (*111 Opera Masterpieces*)

Terms to Know



- ✦ Bohemia, Bohemian
- ✦ Henri Murger,
Scènes de la Vie de Bohème
- ✦ Latin Quarter
- ✦ Giulio Ricordi
- ✦ *Verismo*
- ✦ “Poetry of the Real”
- ✦ *Giovane scuola*
- ✦ Aria
- ✦ Recitative