



# La Bohème

**7 & 9 June 2024**

Music by Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa

Judy Bayley Theatre, University of Nevada Las Vegas

# Message from the General Director

**As Opera Las Vegas** concludes its landmark Twenty-fifth Anniversary Season with these performances of Puccini's immortal masterpiece, *La bohème*, it is a joy to announce OLV's start of "the next quarter of a century" with 2024-2025's A Season of Smiles.

That's right, in a refreshing departure from the usual tragedy and drama, we felt that the world might want a good laugh next season, and so our staged productions lead off with the World Premiere of a wacky one act comic fantasy, *Again and Again and Again* by composer Conrad Cummings, and librettist Mark Campbell (*Approaching Ali*). This taut tale concerns an old man in a primitive 19th century French cave who invokes an enigmatic sorceress to locate his estranged son. He gets more than he bargained for as the two time travel through the years in hot pursuit as his son stubbornly keeps reincarnating in often preposterous guises. Performances are at one of our favorite venues, The Space, on 11, 12, and 13 October 2024.

Mid-season will see the return of an evergreen favorite, Rossini's sassy and delightful opus, *The Barber of Seville*, with a stellar cast and a fresh new Hollywood concept. Not seen in Las Vegas since 2014, Barber will make a welcome return to town at the Horn Theatre, College of Southern Nevada, with shows on 21 and 23 February 2025.

The 2024-2025 major offerings will wrap up with our company's first ever

foray into the tuneful and witty world of Gilbert and Sullivan, with a co-production of the beloved classic *H.M.S. Pinafore* in collaboration with Pacific Opera Project, one of Los Angeles' leading arts organizations. The Las Vegas performances are planned for 6 and 8 June 2025, in the Judy Bayley Theatre, on the University of Nevada Las Vegas campus.

But that is not all in store in our 26th Season! *Celebración Latina* will be back at the Horn with the award-winning *Mariachi Plata*. Annual favorites like *Holiday on Broadway*, and the tribute concerts, *Voices Raised for Vets*, and *Opera Legends in Black* are currently solidifying dates and venues. We'll be back at über-popular restaurant *Monzú* to kick off the whole schedule with *Opera Uncorked* and return to Myron's at the Smith Center with *Viva Verdi!* And of course, we will continue to educate and develop new opera goers with our yearly young family friendly tour of John Davies' fairy tale opera, *Pinocchio*. Watch for more information soon.

We can't wait to welcome you to our Season of Smiles starting next September. But for now, we hope you are entertained and moved by our starry production of *La bohème*.

*Jim Sohre*  
General Director,  
Opera Las Vegas



# Cast

Mimi, a Seamstress .....	Shannon Jennings
Rodolfo, a Poet .....	Arnold Livingston Geis
Marcello, an Artist .....	André Chiang
Musetta, a Singer .....	Olivia Yokers
Schaunard, a Musician .....	Joel Balzun
Colline, a Philosopher .....	Keith Colclough
Benôit, the Landlord .....	Paul Houghtaling
Alcindoro, a State Councillor .....	Paul Houghtaling
Parpignol, a Toy Vendor .....	Collin Salmon
Customs Sergeant .....	Kyle Webb

## Las Vegas Master Singers

Claudia Affan, Alexia Hamilton, Courtney Schwalbe, Valentine Baron, Hunter Fowler, Nathalie Elizondo-Garcia, Chloe Kestermont, Rachelle Datest, Tiara Carlock, Pauline Tamale, Carey Lewis, Collin Salmon, John Gregg, Erick George, Kyle Webb, Michael Rwamunah

## Supernumeraries

Dean Perry, Greg Van Cott, Dolores Doremus

# Creative Team

Conductor and Music Director .....	Joshua Horsch
Stage Director .....	Octavio Cardenas
Las Vegas Master Singers Chorus Master .....	Joe Svendsen
Opera Las Vegas Youth Chorus Master .....	Athena Mertes
Production Pianist .....	Timothy Accurso
Stage Manager .....	Bonita Bunt
Assistant Stage Manager .....	Chase Orlando Gutierrez
Assistant Stage Manager .....	Danielle Noletto
Lighting and Projection Design .....	Catherine M. Pratt
Titles Operator .....	Madelyn Salazar
Props and Furniture Coordination .....	Tasia Sutfin
Technical Assistance .....	Camren Wakefield
Costume Coordinator .....	Abby Stroot
Costumes Design .....	Sandra Vest

*Costumes provided by Tri-Cities Opera*

**Orchestral Edition** .....

Bryan Higgins

*by arrangement with Motet Publishing Company*

# La bohème Synopsis

The action is set in Paris during the early 1930s

**ACT I:** It is Christmas Eve. Marcello, a painter, is trying to create a monotype in the extreme cold of a studio he shares with Rodolfo, a writer; Rodolfo volunteers to warm them both up by burning the manuscript of his play. Their friends arrive: Colline, despondent that he has failed to sell any books, and Schaunard, triumphant with money and food and wine. He proposes that they celebrate at the Café Momus. Just as they are about to leave, the landlord arrives with a demand for rent. They manage to avoid paying and set off, leaving Rodolfo behind to finish an article.

There is a knock at the door. It is Mimì, a neighbour, who is so weak that she faints. Rodolfo revives her and helps her to look for the key she has dropped; in the darkness, their hands touch. From the street below, Rodolfo's friends call out for him to hurry up; he promises to join them with Mimì.

**ACT II:** Outside Café Momus, last-minute Christmas shopping is in progress. Rodolfo introduces Mimì to his friends. Marcello loses his temper when his old flame, Musetta, walks by with Alcindoro, her companion; his upper-class impatience drives her to make an outrageous scene. Finally, she dispatches Alcindoro to buy her a pair of shoes and throws herself into Marcello's arms. The waiter arrives with the bill. As a military tattoo passes by, Musetta instructs the Bohemians to add their bill to hers: Alcindoro can settle them both.

## INTERMISSION, 20 MINUTES

**ACT III:** On a cold February dawn, people enter the district looking for work. Mimì asks Marcello to speak to Rodolfo for her because his jealousy has made their life together impossible. She overhears the men talking about her: Rodolfo believes she is so ill that her only chance of recovery is to leave him and his life of poverty. Marcello and Musetta quarrel while Rodolfo and Mimì confront the necessity of separation.

**ACT IV:** It is spring. Marcello and Rodolfo are alone again, trying to work, though their thoughts stray to their absent lovers. Schaunard and Colline bring some meagre food and the four friends pretend that they are enjoying a fine dinner party with dancing. They are interrupted when Musetta bursts in to say that Mimì is dying. She wants to be with Rodolfo. The friends do what they can, but it is too late to save her.



**Thanks for the Memories:** It is with tremendous love and appreciation that we thank the amazing photographer (and dear friend) Richard Brusky, for many years of documenting our productions with stupendous and comprehensive albums of vibrant production photos. We wish him well in his new home in Colorado, and while he is sorely missed, he will be forever remembered and admired.

**Thanks, Richard, for documenting the memories!**

# La bohème Orchestra

Featuring Members of the Las Vegas Philharmonic

## **Violin I**

De Ann Letourneau  
Martha Gronemeier  
Alexandr Dzyubinsky  
Jennifer Eriksson  
Eric McAllister

## **Violin II**

Kevork Mikaelian  
James Harvey  
Lauren Cordell  
Lee Schreiber  
Yurika Sinoto

## **Viola**

Hanna Suk  
Sharon Street-Caldwell  
Hope Bowden

## **Cello**

Moonlight Tran  
Elena Kapustina  
Emily Leavitt

## **Bass**

Paul Firak

## **Flute/Piccolo**

Donnie Malpass

## **Oboe**

Stephen Caplan

## **Clarinet**

Jonathan Cannon  
Paniz Shafaei

## **Bassoon**

Ashlea Sheridan

## **Horn**

Frank Joyce  
Michael Manley

## **Trumpet**

Thomas Wright

## **Bass Trombone**

Jeffrey Stupin

## **Timpani**

Cara Froelich

## **Percussion**

Rachel Julian

## **Harp**

Louise Vickerman

## **Opera Las Vegas Youth Chorus**

Alexis Prieto, Ava Angotti, Daniel Heffner, Emily Menjivar, Faith Reboredo, Isabella Bishara, Izzy North, Juan Guevara Galvis, Kadie Gallego, Karly Ramirez, Leilani Kim-Manning, Lunette Ramirez, Lydia Shelton, Maya Markvan, Nicholas Feist, Robyn Hartley, Sophia Ramis, Sylvia Lenker, Trenton Mellen

## **Props and Set Pieces Generously Provided By**

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Without our generous home hosts, Opera Las Vegas would not be able to bring in nationally acclaimed out of town artists to perform in and create our productions. We are exceedingly thankful for the incredible hospitality shown to our "Team La bohème" by:

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*Helmi Merkley*

*Chris and Anita Murray*

*Danita and Jonathan Richter*

# Performers



## *Shannon Jennings* ..... *Mimi*

Praised by the Washington Post for her dramatic intensity and vocal ability, soprano Shannon Jennings continues to wow critics and audiences alike. In the 2023-2024 season, Ms. Jennings dazzles in exciting role debuts and star billings, singing the title role in *Rusalka* with Opera Orlando, the title role in *Turandot* with Gulfshore Opera, and joins Resonance Works for the title role in Pauline Viardot's *Cendrillon*. Renowned for her portrayal of Mimi in *La bohème*, she next performs the role in a house debut with Charleston Opera Theater.



## *Arnold Livingston Geis* ..... *Rodolfo*

Lauded by Opera Today for his "sizable lyric instrument" and "honeyed tone on all registers," tenor Arnold Livingston Geis is a graduate of Washington National Opera's prestigious Cafritz Young Artist Program. In the 2023/24 season, Geis begins as tenor soloist with the Phoenix Symphony's *Carmina Burana* and he returns to Lincoln Center, making his NY Philharmonic debut creating the role of Josef in Aaron Zigman's Oratorio *Émigré* (US premiere).

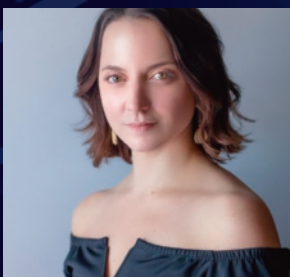
Geis created the role of Mr. Marks in Lynn Nottage and Ricky Ian Gordon's *Intimate Apparel* with Lincoln Center Theater in the 2021/22 Season.



## *André Chiang* ..... *Marcello*

Baritone André Chiang has been described as "vocally commanding" (Oregonian), and "handsome of voice" (Opera News). Chiang's engagements include Ping (*Turandot*) with Opera Delaware, Marcello (*La bohème*) and Artist Martinez/*Ecce Homo* (*Behold the Man* - world premiere) with Opera Las Vegas, and Escamillo (*Carmen*) with Opera Western Reserve. Chiang has also been seen with the Glimmerglass Festival, Opera

Theatre of Saint Louis, Opera Philadelphia, the Atlanta Opera, Virginia Opera, and New Orleans Opera, among others.



## *Olivia Yokers* ..... *Musetta*

Acclaimed for singing with "gorgeous vulnerability" (The Richmond Times), soprano Olivia Yokers is well-regarded for her thrilling voice and versatility on stage. Ms. Yokers' most recent company engagements include Oklahoma Lyric Theater, Painted Sky Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Dayton Opera, Utah Festival Opera, and Virginia Opera. Notable roles are Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance* (Dayton Opera, Tulane Summer Lyric, Utah Festival

Opera), Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* (Dayton Opera, Chance Opera Theatre), and Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Virginia Opera).



*Joel Balzun..... Schumann*

Described as a “mature artist with a voluminous sound,” baritone and composer Joel Balzun is establishing himself as a mature new voice in the future of music. Highlights of his 2023-2024 season include a debut at Los Angeles Opera, Mozart works with San Luis Obispo Master Chorale and a recital with Cincinnati Song Initiative. Other recent highlights include Giorgio Germont (La traviata) at Opera Santa Barbara, and recitals featuring Black Dog by Tom Cipullo throughout Southern California.



*Keith Colclough..... Colline*

Bass-baritone Keith Colclough was praised in Opera News for his “rich authoritative” voice. He has been a soloist with the LA Philharmonic, Pacific Opera Project, Opera Santa Barbara, Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera, and Santa Barbara Choral Society. Past roles include Don Basilio (Il Barbiere di Siviglia), Doctor Bartolo (Le Nozze di Figaro), and Peter Quince (A Midsummer Night’s Dream). As an educator, Dr. Colclough is Associate Professor of Voice and Director of Opera at Pepperdine University.



*Paul Houghtaling..... Benoit/Calciandoro*

Bass-baritone Paul Houghtaling has sung a diverse repertoire in the U.S. and abroad. Highlights include the Philip Glass soundtrack to Reggio’s film Naqoyqatsi; Carnegie Hall solo appearances with Cecelia Chorus of New York, and American Composers Orchestra; Waverly Consort tours, including the Kennedy Center; and “Opera Buffa: Comedy On Stage” on Lincoln Center’s “Meet the Artists” series. He appeared with Central City, Baltimore, Boston Lyric, Knoxville, and Santa Fe Operas.



*Joshua Horsch..... Conductor*

Commended for conducting with “steady acumen and considerable aplomb” and “awesome control” (Opera Today), Joshua Horsch is a versatile operatic and symphonic conductor. Two-time winner of the American Prize in Opera Conducting, Joshua serves as Opera Las Vegas’ Music Director and Principal Conductor. Recent and upcoming conducting engagements include appearances with Washington National Opera, Las Vegas Philharmonic, Des Moines Metro Opera, and Pacific Opera Project.



*Octavio Cardenas..... Stage Director*

Stage director Octavio Cardenas captivates audiences with his visionary, visceral, and physical style of directing. Opera News has praised him for creating “an immersive theater experience” while the Dallas Morning News found he brought “every character and situation to life.” Recent projects include Cruzar la cara de la Luna with Opera Santa Barbara, and the World Premiere of Zorro with Fort Worth Opera, and, and Catán’s Florencia en el Amazonas with Eastman Opera Theater, where he serves as Professor of Opera.

# Opera Las Vegas Needs Your Support!

Like every non-profit, Opera Las Vegas is only able to keep producing high quality professional programming thanks to donations, sponsorship, and advertising by loyal supporters, personal and corporate. But OLV urgently needs to increase its base of support to continue well into “the next twenty-five” years of outstanding programs and services. Ticket sales account for only a small portion of income to produce this glorious, but expensive art form.

We need your help to keep the music going, whether it is a onetime donation, planned estate giving, monthly allotments, artist sponsorships, performance underwriting, advertising to a discerning base, or title recognition for major performances. If, like us, you are committed to the importance of sustaining a professional opera company in the Las Vegas Valley, we would love to speak with you about a myriad of funding and advertising opportunities. For more information, please visit the website at [www.operalasvegas.com](http://www.operalasvegas.com) or contact Jim Sohre at [Director@operalasvegas.com](mailto:Director@operalasvegas.com)

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