



2023-24 Hal & Jeanette Segerstrom
Family Foundation Classical Series

LA BOHÈME

Thursday, April 4, 2024 @ 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 6, 2024 @ 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, April 9, 2024 @ 8:00 p.m.

Carl St.Clair, conductor

Omer Ben Seadia, stage director

Pacific Chorale—Robert Istad, Artistic Director

Southern California Children's Chorus—Lori Loftus, Director

Mimi: Teresa Perrotta, soprano

Rodolfo: Adam Diegel, tenor

Musetta: Alisa Jordheim, soprano

Marcello: Seunghyeon Baek, baritone

Colline: Andrew Potter, bass

Benoit & Alcindoro: Philip Cokorinos, bass baritone

Schaunard: John Allen Nelson, baritone

Mimi Study Cover: Jessica Choi, soprano

Supernumerary & Rodolfo Study Cover: William Grundler, tenor

Supernumerary & Colline Study Cover: Shyheim Hinnant, bass

Strolling Vendor: Jason Francisco, tenor

Pargignol: Nicholas Preston, tenor

Toll-Gate Official: Matthew Kellaway, bass

Sergeant: Ryan Thomas Antal, bass

Joe Beumer, lighting designer

Ryan Howell, scenic designer

Ryan Park, costume designer

Ronell Oliveri, hair & makeup designer

Pamela Marsden and Andrea Corona, properties coordinators

Katherine Freer, video content designer

Scan QR Code to read full bios for creative artists, cast
and technical artists.

PROGRAM

PUCCINI

La Bohème

Act I

Act II

—INTERMISSION—

Act III

Act IV

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Israeli director Omer Ben Seadia is known for her cutting-edge and socially aware opera productions. With a strong background in both traditional and contemporary opera, she is set to direct the world premiere of *The Snowy Day* at Houston Grand Opera, along with productions of *The Magic Flute*, *The Merry Widow*, *Thumbprint*, and *Tosca* at various opera houses.

Her recent works include *Carmen* and *Rigoletto*, reflecting her wide-ranging directorial skills. Having begun her prominent US career in 2012 after working with the Israeli Opera, Ben Seadia is deeply invested in nurturing new talent, teaching at leading institutions like Houston Grand Opera Studio and Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago. She completed her opera directing studies at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and holds degrees from Seminar HaKibutzim School of Performing Arts. Scan QR Code to read full bio.



Since becoming the Phillip N. & Mary A. Lyons Artistic Director of Pacific Chorale in 2017, Robert Istad, a GRAMMY® Award-winning conductor, has been acclaimed for his artistic excellence.

His leadership is characterized by the Chorale's artistic growth, including innovative performances and new commissions. Notably, Istad prepared the Chorale for its GRAMMY®-winning rendition of Mahler's Eighth Symphony with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, under Gustavo Dudamel. He has also led performances like *All Things Common: The Music of Tarik O'Regan* and collaborated with renowned conductors and organizations, including Esa-Pekka Salonen, John Williams, Pacific Symphony, and Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra, affirming his status in the choral music scene. Scan QR Code to read full bio.



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This concert is being recorded for broadcast on
July 28, 2024 on Classical California KUSC.

Performance at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Lori Loftus, Founding Director of the Southern California Children's Chorus (SCCC), has led the chorus to three Emmy® Awards and global performances at venues like Carnegie Hall. With over 26 years at SCCC, she's also a renowned keyboardist with Pacific Symphony, performing on the great organ and for Handel's *Messiah*. Loftus has earned accolades for her musical contributions, including California State University, Fullerton's (CSUF) Outstanding Alumni Award in 2007 and the 'Titan of Music' award in 2022. [Scan QR Code to read full bio.](#)



Soprano Teresa Perrotta, 2023 Grand Finals Winner of The Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition and Cafritz Young Artist at WNO, will feature in Jeanine Tesori's *Grounded* and *Songbird*, and as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* at The Santa Fe Opera. Upcoming debuts include the Erie Philharmonic in *Carmina Burana* and The Santa Fe Symphony in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. Notable performances are her Kennedy Center debut, *La Bohème* at The Glimmerglass Festival, and *The Ghosts of Versailles* at L'Opéra royal de Versailles. A contemporary opera advocate with multiple accolades, Perrotta holds degrees from Eastman School of Music and University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. [Scan QR Code to read full bio.](#)



Korean American tenor Adam Diegel is acclaimed for his powerful performances and strong presence, earning praise for roles like Cavaradossi in *Tosca*. He debuted at the Metropolitan Opera as Froh in *Das Rheingold*, and his repertoire includes significant roles such as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* and Ismaele in *Nabucco* at The Met. Diegel has performed extensively across the U.S., including in major roles in *Tosca*, *Carmen*, and *La Bohème*, and internationally, he has been featured in *Carmen* at the English National Opera and as Pinkerton in Opera Australia's *Madama Butterfly*, among others. His global engagements span from the United States to Europe and Asia, showcasing his versatility and appeal as a leading tenor in the opera world. [Scan QR Code to read full bio.](#)



Soprano Alisa Jordheim, praised for her "resplendent" voice and "impeccable coloratura," has been recognized as a rising star by Operavox and WQXR New York Public Radio. This season, she debuts as Musetta in *La Bohème*, performs in Offenbach's *Songbird*, makes her London debut, and engages in concerts and recordings. Known for her acclaimed performance as Gilda with San Diego Opera and Pacific Symphony in *Rigoletto*, Jordheim's versatility spans classical to contemporary opera. A Fulbright Scholar interested in Scandinavian music, she has premiered new works and recorded with Lori Laitman. Jordheim, with degrees from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, lives in Milwaukee, contributing to the music scene. [Scan QR Code to read full bio.](#)



Baritone SeungHyeon Baek, praised for his "full, generous baritone voice," has performed at the Metropolitan Opera in *La Bohème* and *Falstaff*, debuting as Scarpia in *Tosca* and *Gianni Schicchi*. This season, he covers Marcello in *La Bohème* at The Met and performs the role with Hawaii Opera Theatre. Baek's notable engagements include Opera Orlando, Canadian Opera Company, and Maryland Lyric Opera, showcasing his range from *Il Trovatore* to *Le Nozze di Figaro*. As a concert soloist, he's appeared at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. Baek, educated at Mannes College of Music, Manhattan School of Music, and ChungAng University, has won the NJ State Opera's Alfredo Silipigni Competition and the Career Bridges Competition. [Scan QR Code to read full bio.](#)



Bass Andrew Potter stands out in the opera world for his compelling presence and powerful voice, making notable debuts this season at prestigious venues like Dallas Opera and Santa Fe Opera, where he takes on significant roles including Angelotti in *Tosca*. He's also known for his performances in varied roles across multiple opera companies. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Potter continued to engage audiences with virtual performances and selected operas. His broad repertoire showcases his versatility, covering roles from the deep and complex Mephistopheles in *Faust* to the dynamic and comedic Don Bartolo in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Trained by renowned instructors and a veteran of esteemed Young Artist programs, Potter's career reflects his wide-ranging vocal skills and a strong commitment to his craft. [Scan QR Code to read full bio.](#)



Philip Cokorinos, a 1985 winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, debuted at the Met in 1988. With over 400 performances in 40 operas, including *The Ghosts of Versailles* and *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, he's recently appeared in significant roles at the Met and other venues. Beyond the Met, Cokorinos has performed with Los Angeles and San Diego Operas, among others, in a variety of roles. His concert work and discography include collaborations with the Montreal Symphony and a GRAMMY®-winning recording of *The Ghosts of Versailles* with Los Angeles Opera. [Scan QR Code to read full bio.](#)



Irish-American baritone John Allen Nelson, known for his "hearty sound" and acting, debuts in 2024 with Bel Cantanti Opera and performs with the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra and Pacific Symphony. He's had leading roles in *Don Giovanni*, *Rigoletto*, and *La Bohème*, and performed *Don Giovanni* via Zoom during the pandemic. Nelson debuted with Opera Santa Barbara and New York City Opera in *Stonewall* and has also performed in concerts, including with Masterworks Chorale in Boston. He holds a Master of Music from the University of Missouri Kansas City and a Bachelor of Arts from St. John's University, Minnesota. [Scan QR Code to read full bio.](#)



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The GRAMMY® Award-winning PACIFIC CHORALE, renowned since its inception in 1968, is celebrated for its versatility, performing with "polish, poise and tonal splendor" (*Orange County Register*). Based in Orange County and the resident choir at Segerstrom Center for the Arts, it has gained national prominence for its artistic innovation and commitment to expanding the choral repertoire. The Chorale has premiered over 40 works by distinguished composers like John Adams and Eric Whitacre. Under Artistic Director Robert Istad, it presents its own

concert series, collaborates regularly with Pacific Symphony, and made a notable Carnegie Hall debut in 2018. It won a 2022 GRAMMY® for Best Choral Performance with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. The Chorale's international acclaim includes a 2023 tour in Europe and past performances in 19 countries. It emphasizes choral music education with various programs and reaches global audiences through digital offerings, including The Wayfaring Project concert film. More at www.pacificchorale.org.

Robert Istad • Artistic Director & Conductor
Phillip N. and Mary A. Lyons
Artistic Director Chair
Kibsaim Escárcega • Assistant Conductor

Alex Nelson • Vice President, Artistic Production & Operations
David Clemensen, DMA • Collaborative Pianist
Aram Barsamian • Language Coach

SOPRANO

Rebecca Hasquet
Section Leader
Lauren Adaska
Kristi Barnes
Alexandria Burdick
Andria Nuñez Cabrera
Chelsea Chaves
Ayana Delk-Lewis
Karla Verónica Gil
Amy Glinskas
Adrien Gonzalez
Saousan Jarjour
Corinne Larsen Linza
Sarah Lonsert
Anne McClintic
Maria Cristina Navarro
Deborah Pasarow
Olivia Siri
Sarah Sweerman
Victoria Wu

ALTO

Jane Hyun-Jung Shim
Section Leader
Emily Border
Kathryn Cobb-Woll
Denean R. Dyson
Ivanna Evans
Erin Girard
Brandon Harris
Eleen Hsu-Wentlandt
Bonita Jaros
Kristen Kleinhans
Pat Newton
Kathleen Preston
Tiffani Santiago
Stephanie Shepson
Rachel Steinke
Erin Theodorakis
Abby Tyree
Mayuri Vasan
Bonnie Yoon

TENOR

Nicholas Preston
Section Leader, Roger W. Johnson Memorial Chair
Jephthe Acosta
Mike Andrews
Sheridan Ball
Michael Ben-Yehuda
Nate Brown
Chris Buttars
Abraham Cervantes
Jason Francisco
Alan Garcia
Vincent Hans
Craig S. Kistler
Jin Ming Liao
David López Alemán
Paul Meissbach
Michael Peck
Sammy Salvador,
Ron Gray Legacy Chair
Jeff Wang
Frank Watnick
Yngwie Slassh Zamarippa

BASS

Ryan Thomas Antal
Section Leader, Ron Gray Legacy Chair
Kyle Boshardy
Louis Ferland
Carlos Franquez Jr.
Sean Gabel
Randall Gremillion
Jared Hughes
Matthew Kellaway
Jonathan Krauss
Dylan Leisure
Connor Licharz
Martin Minnich
Emmanuel Miranda
Kenneth Moore
Ryan Morris
Seth Peelle
Ryan Ratcliff
George Reiss
Michael Segura

Founded in 1996, the Southern California Children's Chorus (SCCC) is a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to enhancing children's lives through high-quality choral music education and performance. Serving nearly 300 children aged 5 to 20, SCCC emphasizes musical skill, teamwork, discipline, self-confidence, and personal growth, earning three EMMY® awards and international recognition. The chorus has performed at prestigious venues like Carnegie Hall and the Sydney Opera House and has participated in various productions, including films, television, and live Disney events. Noteworthy performances include

collaborations with Steven Tyler and Joe Perry of Aerosmith, and Esperanza Spalding at the Academy Awards.

SCCC offers a tiered choral program across six levels, led by experienced faculty. It is tuition-based but committed to accessibility, offering scholarships and financial assistance to ensure no child is excluded due to economic constraints. Fundraising and community support significantly contribute to SCCC's budget, underlining its commitment to affordability and inclusivity in choral music education.

Devon Alaniz
Elianna Alaniz
Katie Baker
Carmina Blanco
Emily Chang
Mykela Del Rosario
Maggie Di Peppino
Bena Feng
Jaclyn Gergens
Huy-Jonas Glassey-Tranguyen
Kien-Lucas Glassey-Tranguyen
Jenna Hallowell
Chrissa Kilpatrick
Winston Kim
Avni Krishnamoorthy
Hope Lee
Lauren Lee
Samantha Lee

Owen Lemen
Brianna Liauw
Emma McDowell
Maximiliano Medina
Sofia Mendez
Hanna Neyer
Kate Neyer
Kristen Norris
Isabella Ortiz

Emma Pinza
Zelda Preston
Hellen Romero
Emma Samuelson
Kalia Simes
Jacob Thompson
Kai Wright
Mia Wright

PROGRAM NOTES

Ah, To Be Young...In Love...and In Paris!
I don't understand the Parisians
Making love every time they get the chance
I don't understand the Parisians
Wasting every lovely night on romance



This charming lament comes to us from a girl named Gigi—the gawky teenager poised on the brink of womanhood in Hollywood's 1958 best-picture Oscar winner. Her words are funny precisely because we do understand the Parisians. We know that they are surrounded by the joys and sorrows of love in the most romantic city on earth...that to be young, in love, and in Paris is a universal ideal of romance. And we know that soon, inevitably, Gigi will know it, too.

Puccini's swooningly emotional evocation of young Parisians in love has made *La Bohème*, by some reckonings, the most popular opera ever composed. The story of the lovers Mimi and Rodolfo and their band of friends ends sadly, with Mimi's death. Still, it is far gentler than the gritty operas—often violent and shockingly sexualized—that brought Puccini to prominence as the foremost composer of *Verismo* ("realistic") operas. The turn away from Romanticism and idealism toward realism was reflected in books ranging from Balzac's *La Comédie humaine* and Zola's *Germinal* to the novels of Charles Dickens and stories of Guy de Maupassant; on the opera stage, Bizet's 1875 masterpiece *Carmen* shocked respectable Parisians with its frankness, opening the way for Puccini's close colleagues Leoncavallo and Mascagni. Their accounts of sex, squalor, and street life in *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* astounded audiences in 1890 as *Carmen* had 15 years earlier. In 1893 Puccini's first big hit, *Manon Lescaut*, grafted an elegant veneer onto an equally sordid story. By 1895, when Puccini composed *La Bohème*, operagoers were eager for just such a music-drama as this—one that combined a realistic account of illness and the privations of urban poverty with a glowingly sympathetic portrayal of young love.

Henri Murger, the source for the episodes dramatized in *La Bohème*, wrote from firsthand experience. Like Puccini's Rodolfo (and like the George Orwell of *Down and Out in Paris and London*), Murger was born to financial privilege and spent time "slumming" for the sake of his art; he spent the 1840s writing now-forgotten poetry while living in a series of frigid attic apartments and hotel rooms in Paris's Latin Quarter, an area that housed the lower class and a large student population. If Murger's hardships were real, his choices suggest a certain dilettantism...a kind of willful wantonness. His disapproving father withheld financial support, forcing Henri to resort to writing personal essays to help pay the rent. Urged on by a friend, he produced some 30 installments entitled *Scènes de la vie de Bohème*, which were published in 1848 in the satirical Parisian periodical *Le Corsaire*. The following year these vignettes, which together told a realistic and largely autobiographical story of life and love on the seamy Left Bank, were rewritten as a play. Its tremendous success secured Murger sufficient income to move to the more respectable side of the Seine.

Although Murger died relatively young, his stories have endured. His use of the word "bohemian" came to identify for later generations the poverty-stricken, footloose lifestyle of aspiring young artists and youth in rebellion. It's easy to see why these tales, when animated by Puccini's genius, are irresistibly popular. Who hasn't experienced the pleasures and pains of everyday life? The vicissitudes of hardship, poverty, and despair? The pleasures of a good meal and the company of friends? Murger's stories were so apt for this purpose that in the space of nine years they inspired operas by three different composers. Only Puccini's remains in the standard repertoire.

SYNOPSIS: Act I

In the attic apartment he shares with friends in the Latin Quarter of Paris, the poet Rodolfo stares out the garret window as the artist Marcello paints. They grouse about the cold and burn the manuscript of Rodolfo's play in their stove for heat. Then the philosopher Colline returns, followed by the musician Schaunard—who, having managed to buy food, wine, and cigars after an unexpected job, is jubilant. Their landlord arrives to collect the rent, but is thwarted when a combination of wine, flattery, and confusing banter sends him packing without the money he's owed; the friends will divide it for a Christmas Eve outing at the Cafe Momus downstairs.

Remaining alone in their apartment as his friends leave, Rodolfo hears a knock: it's their neighbor Mimi, whose candle has blown out. In the few moments it takes for her to lose her key, both lose their hearts and exchange life stories. The frail Mimi coughs and at first demurs to join Rodolfo. But as the act ends they descend the stairs together, ecstatically singing of their new-found love on their way to the cafe.

Act II

Christmas Eve at the Cafe Momus is a boisterous affair. Rodolfo buys a bonnet from a vendor for Mimi while Colline buys a coat and Schaunard a horn. The street bustles with children and celebrants. Musetta, a flamboyant flirt who is Marcello's ex, arrives on the arm of the doddering, wealthy Alcindoro, whom she torments and manipulates by turns. She sends him away to have her suddenly-too-tight shoe repaired, then rushes into passionate embrace with Marcello. Alcindoro returns just in time to be presented with the bill for all the festivities he's missed. This joyful outing is perhaps the greatest happiness that these six friends will ever know together.

Act III

Two months have passed, and it is a cold February morning at an entry point into the city. Wracked by coughing, Mimi searches for Marcello, who currently lives near the gate at a tavern where he works as a sign-painter. Mimi confides to him that despite the love that she and Rodolfo share, she is tormented by his jealousy. But then Rodolfo confides—and Mimi overhears—his fears over her worsening health; his jealousy is a ruse that he hopes will push her toward a wealthier lover who can take better care of her. They resolve to separate "senza rancore," without bitterness. But then, unable to bear parting, they resolve to remain together until spring. Their non-farewell provides a musical foil for the bickering of Marcello and Musetta, who cannot live with each other or without each other.

Act IV

Back in their garret apartment, Marcello and Rodolfo are trying to ply their respective arts, but they have women on their minds: Mimi and Musetta have left them for wealthier men. But then Musetta appears, her former gaiety replaced by seriousness. She is gravely concerned for Mimi, who is weakened by illness and has asked Musetta to bring her to Rodolfo. They help her onto a bed and she briefly feels better, but is near death. Colline leaves to pawn his overcoat for medicine; Rodolfo brings out the bonnet he bought for her on Christmas Eve, which he has kept as a remembrance. The six friends share their last moments of affection with Mimi as her life ebbs away, and the opera ends as Rodolfo helplessly calls her name.

Michael Clive is a cultural reporter living in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. He is program annotator for Pacific Symphony and has written numerous articles for magazines and newspapers in the U.S. and U.K. and hundreds of program notes for orchestras and opera companies. Operahound.com