

MetroWest Opera's La Femme Boheme Touches on Familiar Issues, Coming to Town

By Guest Writer | May 16, 2017



MetroWest Opera

MetroWest Opera brings La Femme Boheme to the Mosesian Center for the Arts. The performance features and all female cast in the Puccini Classic.

MetroWest Opera will run the regional premiere of *La Femme Bohème* at the The Charles and Dorothy Mosesian Center for the Arts in Watertown. Music Direction by Tian Hui Ng. Stage Direction by Julia Mintzer.

This all-female version of Puccini's classic—first produced in Austin, Texas by Local Opera, Local Artists (LOLA)—is a wholly reimagined, contemporary retelling of the iconic *La Bohème*. In the current politically tumultuous climate where the most vulnerable in our society are facing constant threats, *La Femme Bohème* brings new perspective to Puccini's score and asks the audience to examine gender roles and stereotypes. The women of *La Femme Bohème* are strong, independent, funny, irreverent. They are all unique and are not solely defined by their gender or sexuality.

Julia Mintzer has placed the opera in modern times, within a protest against the establishment vaguely reminiscent of Occupy Wall Street. She views the story of *Bohème* as easily transferring to today. "Seeing the interactions between Mimi and Rodolfo, without the lens of assumptions of gendered behaviors, asks the audience to question their relationship rather than romanticize it," Mintzer offers. Even Mimi's death from tuberculosis doesn't feel out of place, with the Affordable Care Act currently on the chopping block. Julia reasons, "It is completely feasible that someone like Mimi, a young woman living in a large American city, could die of a completely treatable, preventable illness...The anti-vaccine movement has brought on new outbreaks of measles and whooping cough. Someone like Mimi would very likely not have health insurance. She probably doesn't have the cash to pay out of pocket to see a doctor."

Clearly this opera is timeless in its music and its themes.

MetroWest Opera also hopes to facilitate conversations about gender equality in opera with this production. “The vast majority of operas have more male roles than female, even though there are exponentially more women singers in the field than men. We’re looking for ways to change that,” MetroWest Opera Founder and Artistic Director and Dana Lynne Varga says. La Femme Bohème is double-cast, and will be performed with an orchestra and supertitles. The production opens on May 18th at 8pm at the Mosesian Center for the Arts (formerly the Arsenal

Center for the Arts), 321 Arsenal St in Watertown. Tickets and more information at metrowestopera.org (<http://metrowestopera.org>).

MetroWest Opera is a grass-roots, professional opera company producing fully-staged opera productions with orchestra, and providing paid performance opportunities and unique educational programming to young classical singers.

WHEN: Thursday, May 18 and Friday May 19 at 8 PM. Saturday, May 20 at 3 PM and 8 PM. Sunday, May 21 at 3 PM and 7:30 PM.

WHERE: The Charles and Dorothy Mosesian Center for the Arts, 321 Arsenal Street, Watertown, MA 02134. Tickets are between \$30 and \$40 inclusive of fees.

OPENING NIGHT RECEPTIONS: There will be opening night receptions both Thursday, May 18th in the Gallery/Bar of the Mosesian Center, and on Friday, May 19th on the patio of Branchline, a restaurant adjacent to the theater, to celebrate both casts of performers. All audience members on those nights are encouraged to attend.

WERS Radio Segment: This WERS Radio Segment includes interviews with MetroWest Opera’s creative team, and performances by singers from La Femme Bohème: <http://bit.ly/2qRosT7> (<http://bit.ly/2qRosT7>)

(This is a SoundCloud Clip).

If you would like more information about this show, please contact William Neely at 978-210-2709 or email at metrowestopera@gmail.com (<mailto:metrowestopera@gmail.com>).
