



The Charleston Opera production of the Puccini masterwork ***La Bohème***, the most beautiful, tragic love story of all Italian Grand Opera, will come to the Sonesta Shipyard on Hilton Head Island January 21st and 22nd, 2017. This whole year, in all the cities across America, there have been just six productions of this magnificent and popular opera.

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With almost a hundred people from opera singers and chorus, orchestra and conductor, lights, stage, sets, costume, make-up, marketing and management, the opera is the most complicated of all the performing arts. Final rehearsals will take three weeks but work began right from the auditions, which were held in the Opera America Center, New York City and at the Miami Music Festival. The artistic director David Templeton, together with author Martin McFie who presents the opera, decided right from the start that this would be an authentic, period production. There is no sound system, the singers project their powerful voices and the orchestra conducted by Michael Rossi support them. The opera is sung in the original Italian but words appear in English on the canopy so that the audience can follow the twists and turns as the story unfolds. The costumes are in 1890s period, the ladies wear button boots and bright dresses. Using some special theatrical smoke and mirrors, the ballroom will be recreated as the magnificent interior of the Nice opera house in France.

High Art in the Lowcountry

Written by Editor

Tuesday, 15 November 2016 10:53

The opera is set in Paris, in the first act our hero Rodolfo sings the beautiful aria *Che gelida manina* to Mimi, your tiny hand is frozen. He rises up to an impossible sustained note and the orchestra rolls up underneath him to a dramatic crescendo like thunder – that's when we know for certain they have fallen hopelessly in love. There are three more acts of drama and wonderful music to follow, yes, and terrible tragedy too.

The award-winning Sonesta hotel in Shipyard on Hilton Head Island will host the event, so special Opera by the Ocean weekend packages are available. Change into evening dress in your hotel room, come down to take a glass of champagne, then go in to hear this most moving masterpiece. After the opera, retire for the night and the following morning walk the beach right outside the hotel with a mind still filled with romance and music. The natural setting is beautiful, people take their time to dress elegantly and make a weekend event of this pinnacle of musical performance.

This is a dramatic experience not to be missed, and never to be forgotten.

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