La Boheme dramatic

La Boheme, an opera in four acts by Giacomo Puccini, presented by the Boston Opera Company; Friday, March 25 at 8pm and Sunday, March 27 at 3pm at the Orpheum Theatre.

By William Lesser

La Boheme is perhaps the perfect opera. Giacomo Puccini's music places him among the great Romantic composers, but it is his theatrical sense, not flair for the dramatic, which makes this tragic love story the premiere example of the power of opera. The Boston Opera Company has produced a Boheme which straddles above all the opera as superb musical theatre. Unlike the recent television broadcast from the Metropolitan Opera Company in New York, this production does not rest on the laurels of brilliant singing. Lacking the likes of Luciano Pavarotti and Renata Scotto, Artistic Director Sarah Caldwell has emphasized the libretto over the musical score, acting over singing. Keeping with this approach, the opera is performed in English.

La Boheme is the story of the tragic love of Rodolfo (Jack Trussel) and Mimi (Magdalena Falewicz). He is a poor Parisian poet, she an equally impoverished seamstress. They meet on Christmas Eve. looking for a light for her candle. She knocked at the door of Rudolfo's garret and is a fine actor. He won first place in the Met Auditions, and his training in the musical theatre fit in perfectly with the tone of the overall

Meanwhile, Musetta (Marianna Chiccarelli) has renewed her affair with Marcello; by the last act, however, they have once again broken up. In the end, Musetta brings Mimi back to the garret. Mimi is close to death, and wants to be near Rudolfo. Surrounded by her friends, she dies quietly, leaving her lover in tears and Musetta and Marcello in each others' arms.

Trussel and Falewicz present fine performances as the ill-fated lovers. Trussel's voice is clear, lacking the Italian tone one is used to hearing in the past, but full of emotion and energy. Falewicz, especially in the famous "Mi chiamano Mimi," is at times weak: her voice sounds strained in the high passages. However, her characterization, facial expressions and acting ability gave the role dramatic force.

Christo's Musetta was outstanding. Her voice was the best in the opera — her rendition of "Musetta's Waltz" in Act Two was the highlight of the performance. The winner of second place in the Metropolitan Opera National Auditions, her tone is clear and vivacious, perfectly suited to her role.

Holgate, who starred in the Broadway production of 1776, has a powerful voice and is a fine actor. He won first place in the Met Auditions, and his training in the musical theatre fit in perfectly with the tone of the overall production.

The first act duets of Rudolfo and Mimi, and their tender duets in the final act, have far to suffer in comparison with the Metropolitan production. But the group numbers, notably among the Bohemian artists, were far more lively and interesting than the Met's. The orchestra was strong but controlled throughout, the sets attractive although perhaps a bit confining.

Caldwell has produced a thoroughly enjoyable Boheme. The Company has captured the essence of the opera, and is in the essence of Puccini.

Rodolfo (Jack Trussel) comforts Mimi (Magdalena Falewicz) on her deathbed in a scene from the opera Company of Boston's production of Puccini's La Boheme.

Guitarist Ron Hudson will give a concert in the upper cafeteria at Bentley College on Saturday evening, March 26. The performance will begin at 8pm. Tickets will be available at the door for $1.00 (with a student ID), and for $2.00 for the general public.

"Rich and Famous," a new comedy by John Guare, will open a four week engagement at the Wilbur Theatre on Monday, March 28 at 8pm, with three special performances scheduled for Friday, March 25 at 8pm and Saturday, March 26 at 2pm.

The mechant of Venice, opening March 31. It will play in repertory with the Company's current production, A Midsummer Night's Dream. Performances of The Merchant of Venice will be every Thursday and Saturday evening at 8pm, with A Midsummer Night's Dream performing Fridays at 8pm. The Boston Shakespeare Company Theatre is located on the corner of Berkeley and Marlborough Streets in Back Bay. The box office telephone is 267-5600.