



ADVERTISEMENT

MSU's talented singers offer 'La Boheme'

Apr. 1, 2014 | 0 Comments

Recommend 24 people recommend this. Be the first of your friends. JOIN US ON:

Recommend 24

Tweet 0

g+1 0

A A



Written by Ken Glickman For the Lansing State Journal

FILED UNDER

Things To Do Things To Do - Music

The last time the Michigan State University Opera Theatre produced the beloved opera, "La Boheme" by Puccini was back in 2004. The company's director, Melanie Helton, was new on the job and had to hire a professional baritone to give her young cast some maturity and strength.

For this production, 10 years later, things have changed, Helton says.

"We have deep talent. We have so many talented singers now that we'll have a double cast for "La Boheme" this weekend, one for Friday

and Sunday, and another for Saturday."

IF YOU GO

"La Boheme"

- **When:** 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 3 p.m. Sunday at Fairchild Theatre, MSU Auditorium.
- **Tickets:** \$20 for adults, \$18 for seniors, and \$5 for students, at music.msu.edu or at the College of Music box office — in person at the Music Building, Room 102, 333 W. Circle Drive, or (517) 353-5340. Also available at the door one hour before show.
- **Preview:** Melanie Helton, director of MSU's Opera Theater, will preview the show 45 minutes before each performance.

This is a banner year for the opera company. Last October they produced the most popular opera in the world, Mozart's "Magic Flute" to try out their brand new digs at the remodeled Fairchild Theatre and next weekend they'll be mounting the second most popular opera, "La Boheme."

Helton is giddy about the new hall.

"It's transformed the college of music and the opera theater. The sound is wonderful. Despite a 60-piece orchestra in the pit, everything fits beautifully."

For many folks in the audience, the conductor who directs the musicians in the pit is the invisible man. Most people don't



ADVERTISEMENT

Most Popular Most Commented More Headlines

- 1 [Graham Couch: Malik McDowell, Mark Dantonio show maturity amid bizarre drama](#)
- 2 [Co-owner of Lansing Asian grocery store admits food stamp fraud](#)

Sponsored Links



LifeLock® Services
24/7 Credit Fraud Monitoring Plan.
Proactive Credit Fraud Protection.
LifeLock.com

Ad Choices

see him when he's conducting, and catch only a glimpse of him during the cast-of-thousands curtain call.

360 Savings Account

360 Savings. No fees. No minimums. Nothing standing in your way. Learn More.
www.capitalone360.com



Sunless Tanner Frenzy
Stores Struggle To Keep Stunning New Sunless Tanners In Stock.
safeskin.org

But in reality, Daniel Beckwith, the visiting music director who will be wielding the baton for "Boheme," is totally in charge of all the music this weekend.

In addition to the rehearsals he's involved with now, he also was at MSU in January working with the singers.

ADVERTISEMENT

Beckwith has an impressive resume, having conducted Chicago's Lyric Opera and making his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1995.

Beckwith was an assistant to James Levine, the legendary music director of the MET for six years. He worked individually with each singer, rehearsing all of the music, language and style. He also worked with the orchestra. During a rehearsal, he was told that Levine had an appointment and would be coming back late for the rehearsal — could he please begin the rehearsal for him.

Knowing the music very well, Beckwith took the baton and conducted the singers and orchestra for quite a while. Suddenly he saw Levine back stage watching him work with the musicians. The appointment story was a ruse — Levine just wanted to watch Beckwith as the boss.

After the rehearsal, Levine told him, "You'll be conducting 'Don Giovanni' next year."

Beckwith said, "I've never been so nervous and excited in my life. There I was standing on the podium, and the entire stage filled with singers and the MET orchestra was waiting for my downbeat. Nothing would start without me."

The conductor admits that some people see opera as stuffy; filled with a foreign language they don't know and with unfamiliar classical music.

But he says opera is far more accessible now. "Most opera companies now offer super titles (English translations projected above the singers) and Broadway has influenced the stage direction to be more energetic and the sets are beautiful. They say, we listen with our eyes," Beckwith said.

Although most Broadway shows are totally miked, Beckwith is proud to say that very few operas are amplified today.

Beckwith now divides his time between university opera companies and professionals. "I love to work with young singers," Beckwith

3 Driver beaten by crowd after hitting boy is in critical condition, Detroit police say

4 LSJ girls basketball Dream Team, all-area teams

5 Park Madness Elite Eight: Sleepy Hollow vs. Yankee Springs for Mitten South title

Most Viewed

Former MSU basketball players try their hand at Cirque du Soleil
Apr. 02, 2014



PHOTO GALLERIES



MSU basketball 2013-14



Editorial cartoons March 25

SPONSORED LINKS

by Taboola



Think Twice About Your Mortgage Pay...
Weekly Financial Solutions



Forget Tattooing Your Brows And Try This...
Dermstore

said. "They have no bad habits. In this case, I was here two years ago to direct 'The Tales of Hoffman' and the two tenors I worked with are now graduate students and I'm working with them in 'La Boheme.' It's a joy to do that.

"Also, the singers have great voice teachers at MSU and Melanie had an international career before she came here, so she gives the students wonderful training on the stage."



Save 50% on Digital Only Subscription for 6 months. Act now and save.



View Comments (0) | Share your thoughts »

TOP VIDEO PICKS

selected by Taboola

Former MSU basketball players try their hand at...

Apr 2, 2014

Talkin' Spartans: Couch, Rexrode & Sharp previ...

Mar 29, 2014

Talkin' Spartans: Couch, Rexrode & Sharp previ...

Mar 21, 2014

YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN

MSU's Failure: Lab proves nobody's perfect

Michigan's changing state workforce: Smaller, more...

Battle Creek school bus driver arrested; license was...

Tar Heels run past Spartan women

Holt woman charged in 90-mph police chase and crash...

Frigidaire Professional FPHC2398LF - Reviewed.com Refrigerators (Refrigerator Info)

[?]

SPONSORED LINKS

by Taboola



Think Twice About Your Mortgage Payment

Weekly Financial Solutions



Forget Tattooing Your Brows And Try This...

Dermstore



Millennials Are Drinking So Much Wine They'r...

The Huffington Post

ARCHIVES

View the last seven days

- Yesterday, Apr. 02
- Tuesday, Apr. 01
- Monday, Mar. 31

EVENTS CALENDAR

| THU | FRI | SAT | SUN | MON | TUE | WED |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

"Tee It Up for Kids" Charity Golf Scramble
Eagle Eye Golf Club Bath, MI

REAL DEALS



MOST POPULAR

1. Outgoing senior Keith Appling shares feelings in 'tear-jerking' text with Tom Izzo
2. Eaton Rapids man held on \$1M bond in attempted murder case
3. Weather could make for messy commute

Sunday, Mar. 30
Saturday, Mar. 29
Friday, Mar. 28
Thursday, Mar. 27

See our paid archives for news older than a week.

NAMI Family to Family

McLaren-Greater Lansing Lansing, MI

Art Exhibit- JOURNEY: Life From the Inside Out

Charles V. Park Library Mount Pleasant, MI

MORE EVENTS | SUBMIT AN EVENT

Flip, shop and save on specials from your favorite retailers in Lansing, MI 48910

GET DEALS NOW

Thursday morning, improve by Crosstown Showdown

4. Park Madness Elite Eight: Sleepy Hollow vs. Yankee Springs for Mitten South title
5. Graham Couch: Malik McDowell, Mark Dantonio show maturity amid bizarre drama
6. TV Tonight: 'NCIS' spinoff idea wraps up



ADVERTISEMENT

[Site Map](#) | [Back to Top](#)

NEWS

- Elections
- Capitol
- Schools
- Campus
- Photo Galleries
- Watchdog
- Special reports
- Submit News

OBITUARIES

COMMUNITIES

- Eaton County
- Ionia County
- Ingham County
- Clinton County

THINGS TO DO

- Events Calendar
- Arts
- Movies
- Music
- Television
- Literature

BUSINESS

- Auto
- Take 5
- Find a job

VOICES & VIEWS

- Editorials
- Vicki Dozier
- Graham Couch
- Tom Watkins
- Blogs & Columnists
- Letters to the editor
- Outlook

SPORTS

- MSU
- Couch on Fire blog
- Spartan Shadows blog
- Get Prepped blog
- High School
- Photo Galleries
- Running

LIFE

- Events Calendar
- Home & Garden
- Food and Drink
- Celebrations

HELP

- Place an ad
- Subscribe
- Contact Us
- Staff List
- Pay your bill
- Archives
- Reprints
- Site Map
- Terms of Service
- Work for LSJ Media

FOLLOW US

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Mobile
- RSS
- E-mail Alerts

[News](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Cars for Sale](#) | [Homes for Sale](#) | [Apartments for Rent](#) | [Shopping](#)



GANNETT

Copyright © 2014 www.lansingstatejournal.com. All rights reserved.
Users of this site agree to the [Terms of Service](#), [Privacy Notice/Your California Privacy Rights](#), and [Ad Choices](#)

MSU's talented singers offer 'La Boheme'

Written by Ken
Glickman For the
Lansing State
Journal

Apr. 1, 2014 | lansingstatejournal.com

IF YOU GO

"La Boheme" • **When:** 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 3 p.m. Sunday at Fairchild Theatre, MSU Auditorium. •

Tickets: \$20 for adults, \$18 for seniors, and \$5 for students, at music.msu.edu or at the College of Music box office — in person at the Music Building, Room 102, 333 W. Circle Drive, or (517) 353-5340. Also available at the door one hour before show. • **Preview:** Melanie Helton, director of MSU's Opera Theater, will preview the show 45 minutes before each performance.

The last time the Michigan State University Opera Theatre produced the beloved opera, "La Boheme" by Puccini was back in 2004. The company's director, Melanie Helton, was new on the job and had to hire a professional baritone to give her young cast some maturity and strength.

For this production, 10 years later, things have changed, Helton says.

"We have deep talent. We have so many talented singers now that we'll have a double cast for "La Boheme" this weekend, one for Friday

and Sunday, and another for Saturday."

This is a banner year for the opera company. Last October they produced the most popular opera in the world, Mozart's "Magic Flute" to try out their brand new digs at the remodeled Fairchild Theatre and next weekend they'll be mounting the second most popular opera, "La Boheme."

Helton is ciddy about the new hall.

