

Bohemian rhapsody

By SARA FRASER

The Dalhousie Music Department presented Puccini's "La Boheme" last week in a less than traditional manner.

The opera, performed live last Wednesday and Thursday in the Sir James Dunn Theatre, was a showcase for the voices of some of the senior students at Dalhousie.

It was part of Dal Opera Workshop's "Opera Essence". This means that instead of the usual opera sets, costumes, props and grandiose chorus scenes, the players used classical mime techniques and captured the audience's attention using only their voices.

This lack of pageantry was disappointing at first since it was unexpected. The performance was lacking visually and had a very bare appearance. But the

music filled the void. The four acts were sung entirely in Italian, something the Music Dept. has never done. And translation was unnecessary. The meaning of the already simple story was made evident by precise actions and passionate vocal expression.

The story unfolds as Rodolfo (Terrence Graham), a poet, and his artist friends are freezing in their cold garret until one of them enters with a small windfall and they begin to party. Their landlord (Gordon Tucker, who also plays Alcindoro) then appears, demanding the overdue rent. In one of the opera's funniest and most animated scenes, they throw him out of the apartment in pretended indignation after getting him so tipsy he admits to cheating on his wife.

It was apparent that the voice of Marcello (Jeff Morris, baritone) is more trained and his Italian accent less cautious than the other players. Morris is, in fact, a voice instructor for Dalhousie.

The baritone of Shaunard (Paul Moreau) was also well projected and pleasing.

Romance arrives with Mimi (Vicki MacNutt). She knocks at Rodolfo's door, in need of a light for her candle. Both candles are accidentally blown out and in the darkness their hands touch and they fall in love. A beautiful duet follows. MacNutt's soprano was undeniably the most vibrant and colourful of all the voices. Her performance throughout was very powerful. With her voice, we see the purpose of opera essence; there is no need for the extra trappings of traditional opera.

When the group goes to the cafe, Musetta (Shelly Wenaus), a coquette who pursues Marcello, adds a strong presence as well as humour. Although her acting is vivid, her voice is thin, and projects only at the top of her range.

The final act is the most moving. Rodolfo and Marcello are back in their attic working. Each says he has seen the other's love in

a fine carriage, richly attired. The famous duet that follows is a reverie of adoration and nostalgia to Mimi and Musetta. It is here that Graham as Rodolfo finally shows some passion, and timing in the duet is impeccable.

Colline (Dan Grantham, bass) and Shaunard return home with a few morsels of food. The men burst out laughing at its meagreness, and all four playfully brawl on the floor until a distressed Musetta bursts in saying "Mimi has just collapsed on the stairway."

Mimi, who is dying, has asked to be taken back to her true love Rodolfo. While the others go for medicine, Mimi and Rodolfo sing reminiscences of happier days. MacNutt again shows her vocal excellence, this time in her fluttering song of death. She calmly goes to sleep. . . forever! Rodolfo and the others lament, and Colline sings her a sad farewell.

Non-singing roles were played by Kim Jenkins and Ben Cookey.

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Shirreff Hall Ball

Date: November 22, 1986

Time: 9:00 pm - 1:00 am

Place: Shirreff Hall Dining Room

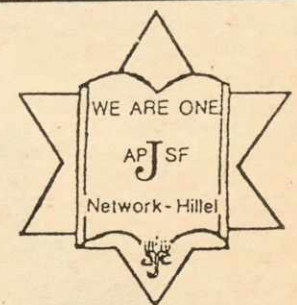
Band: The Syndicate Band

Theme: "Once Upon a Dream"

Tickets:

\$15 per couple, to be sold in Shirreff Hall Lobby from 4:30 pm-6:30 pm on Nov. 17, 18, 19, 20 & 21. Open to all Dal Students, must show Dal I.D. to purchase tickets. First come, first serve.

For more information contact Taralee Marriner at 425-8064



The Atlantic Provinces Jewish Student Federation

is holding Broomball at the Dal Arena on Nov. 15th from 11:00 p.m. 'til whenever . . . There will be a "warm-up" before the broomball from 9:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. in the SUB, Rm. 314. There will be a \$1 cover charge and all you have to bring is the mix. See you there!