

La bohème music exercises

Character Themes

Examine the musical themes given to each of the characters and track how they are used throughout the opera. It would be useful to have a copy of the score for this exercise.

Main character themes:

Rodolfo page 5 last bar/top of 6 bars 1-6



Nei cie - li bi - gi guar - du fu - mar dai mil - le co -
mi - gno - li Pa - ri - gi

The image shows two staves of musical notation for Rodolfo's theme. The first staff is in 3/8 time and contains six measures of music with lyrics underneath. The second staff continues the melody in 3/8 time with lyrics underneath.

Colline's entrance page 14 bars 5 – 10 (Bass line)



The image shows a single staff of musical notation for Colline's entrance. It is in 2/4 time and contains ten measures of music, with the last six measures being the bass line.

Schaunard top of page 22 bars 1-5



The image shows a single staff of musical notation for Schaunard's theme. It is in 6/8 time and contains five measures of music.

Mimi page 56 bars 2 - 4



The image shows a single staff of musical notation for Mimi's theme. It is in common time (C) and contains four measures of music.

Musetta page 143 bars 4 – 7



Divide the class into groups of three/four. Allocate the theme associated with one of the characters to each group and ask them to listen to relevant sections of the opera, noting down when the theme first appears, what the instrumentation is and when it reappears if there is any change to the instrumentation.

For example:

Rodolfo's music (page 5 last bar/top of 6 bars 1-6) is picked up by Marcello. We hear it again when Rodolfo throws part of his manuscript into the stove for warmth. The orchestration has changed, Puccini uses flutes, harp and strings to paint the flickering and dying fire. We hear it again, played by a solo violin as Rodolfo settles down, alone, to work on a newspaper article.

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