

## ***La bohème* practical exercises**

### **Character Improvisations**

Ask your students to develop improvisations around the characters Rodolfo, Marcello, Musetta, Mimi.

Encourage them to research the characters and create backgrounds for each one. For example, what period are they from? (You could choose Puccini's original period or ENO's updated one) Where are they? What would they be wearing? Depending on the resources available, students could look through magazines, library books or the Internet for appropriate photographs and images or quotations and headlines.

To help draw a clear picture of the character they will be portraying they could create a scrapbook or photograph album for one of the characters.

*Tip: download the synopsis and opera pack for information on the characters and visit the InsideOut website Young Singers (blogs) section for singers thoughts on getting into the characters of Mimi and Rodolfo.*

Students should feed back to the rest of the class the information they have gathered.

When the students are as familiar as possible with their chosen character, create a 'hot-seat'. The whole class should sit in a circle and a chair should be placed in the centre of the circle. The student who is being hot-seated should leave the circle and then come back into the circle in character and sit on the hot seat.

Students should ask questions to the character (which could be pre-prepared or improvised, depending on the group). The student who is in the hot seat should always answer all questions in character, and stay in character until they have left the circle.

To further develop this task - as well as creating a back-story, they could also explore what might happen to the remaining characters after Mimi's death. This could be practical or written work.

Mairi Coyle 2007

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