



# THE MIX

“For it was not into my ear you whispered, but into my heart. It was not my lips you kissed, but my soul.”  
 JUDY GARLAND  
 ACTRESS

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Show Review

## Opera at USC captures timeless charm of Puccini's 'Boheme'

“LA BOHEME”  
 ★★★★★ out of ★★★★★

BY CAITLIN COKER  
 THE GAMECOCK

Opera at USC brought to life the mischief and sorrows of four young artists in 19th-century France in its riveting performance of Giacomo Puccini's “La Boheme.”

“La Boheme” is a love story known for its conversational style. Set in 1840s Paris, the artists live

under the same roof, sharing financial and romantic struggles. The poet Rodolfo falls for his neighbor, the quiet seamstress Mimi, whom he ultimately loses. Marcello, a painter, is enamored with flirty tease Musetta.

A theatrical masterpiece could be defined as a timeless performance, written during one era yet enduringly relevant and thought provoking. “La Boheme” has maintained a timeless appeal. The comedic banter in the opera remains hilarious, and the senti-

mental scenes are heartbreaking. The score augments the dramatic elements of each scene as the symphony shifted musical moods to accompany the on-stage action.

“Puccini's sense of drama is impeccable, and his melodic writing soars with excitement,” said Dr. Donald Gray, director of “La Boheme” and Opera at USC.

Opera at USC showcased the amazing, confident voices of its players, from the main characters to the chorus. The range of voices blended beautifully on stage.

But the striking accomplishment of these well-trained vocalists was their prowess in acting. As the players' voices rolled smoothly into the audience, their faces and body language projected emotions to the very last row. Their stage presence was bolstered by both the intensity of their voices and their convincing character portrayals.

Critic and writer Peter Conrad once said, “Almost all opera is in some sense a song about love and death.” “La Boheme” encom-

passed both and more. In addition to the romantically tragic scenes, there were several merrymaking scenes in which characters laughed at their torment or indulged in mirth. These scenes exhibited the versatility of the actors, because they convincingly fluctuated from glee and laughter to loss and misery.

In the last scene, as the artists prepare to eat dinner in their apartment, one of them declares that it is time to dance, and they break out into silliness.

Marcellò wraps his scarf around his head and dances like a woman, as the musician Schaunard and the philosopher Colline engage in mock fencing. Musetta then rushes into the room with grim news about Daisy, and the entire mood is reversed. In this moment, the actors effectively capture the convictions of the characters as they move from lightheartedness to anxiety.

The sets were beautiful yet sim-

♦ OPERA, SEE PAGE 6



With less than a week left before Valentine's Day, hearts and flowers adorn the shelves of many stores on campus.

# Valentine's Day

## V-Day shopping, USC style

BY ELIZABETH GIBBONS  
 THE GAMECOCK

Maybe you've become swept up in the success of Gamecock basketball. Or perhaps you've been replaying the Super Bowl halftime show on your TiVo all weekend. Regardless of why you've been distracted, a quick look at the calendar reveals that Valentine's Day is fast approaching. With less than a week left until V-Day, you might now be realizing that you don't have a gift for your significant other—or any idea what to get.

Calm down. Take a deep breath. And look no further than the Russell House for your sweetie's gift this Valentine's Day. Granted, you might have to look a little farther than Zia Juice—chances are your girlfriend won't see the romantic charm in a smoothie—but the Russell House Bookstore has several holiday gift options.

A display table set up in the front of the store showcases gifts specifically for Valentine's. Inexpensive options such as heart-shaped candles, soap and bath salts are available, along with picture frames and candy. The bookstore also has an entire line of Valentine's Day greeting cards to choose from.

Another gift idea is a Barnes and Noble gift card. Store employee Heather Hadden ex-

plained, “Now that the Russell House Bookstore is a Barnes and Noble store, gift cards are available in any amount and can be redeemed for books, of course, but also for other store merchandise.”

If your sweetie doesn't attend USC, a teddy bear wearing a “Somebody From USC Loves Me,” shirt is sure to please. And the store also has its regular selection of USC logo shirts, sweatshirts and hats. But since it's Valentine's Day, think pink! The Russell House Bookstore offers Carolina hooded sweatshirts, shorts, hats and tees—all available in pink.

If flowers are more your style, check out Earthworks, located in the Russell House next to Cinnabon. Earthworks has roses in the traditional red, but also in several other colors. A dozen roses arranged in a vase costs about \$70, while a half dozen are \$40. A single rose is \$6.50. If you like flowers, but want something a little less expensive, Earthworks is offering an arrangement of assorted flowers for \$25 as a Valentine's Special. Earthworks also offers balloons, cookie baskets and stuffed animals. You can even create a unique basket for your valentine.

Earthworks also delivers to all residence halls and offices on campus. To ensure delivery on Valentine's Day, it is best to order in advance. For students' convenience, however, Earthworks will have extended hours this week, and will be open until 9 p.m. on Friday and 7 p.m. Saturday.

“Of course, you're better off to order as soon as possible, but we realize students procrastinate,” Earthworks employee Don Staley said.

Staley seems to be right about students' propensity for procrastination. Matt Baker, a

♦ VALENTINE, SEE PAGE 6



Teddy bears, picture frames and chocolate displayed at the Russell House Bookstore mark the coming of that special day. Valentine's Day items are already available for purchase, but even so, many students will wait until the last minute to try and find the perfect yet cost-efficient gift for their significant other.



PHOTOS BY MORGAN FORD/ THE GAMECOCK

Movie Review



PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Ashton Kutcher rethinks his life in “The Butterfly Effect,” a film about the cost of poor choices.

## ‘Butterfly’ in need of a do-over

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT  
 ★★★ out of ★★★★★

BY GABRIELLE SINCLAIR  
 THE GAMECOCK

“The Butterfly Effect” takes the old adage, “The road to hell is paved with good intentions,” to new levels—and then proceeds to beat it into the ground. Ashton Kutcher plays Evan, a young man with a horrible childhood who uses his genetically inherited gift/curse to reshape the past with his mind. He discovers that changing one thing for good can lead to an infinitely worse present.

Evan dabbles in no less than six possible presents by traveling back in time through his journals (don't ask) and making rash changes. In these new presents, only the people closest to him

change, thus going against the entire basis of the Chaos theory, which states that even the smallest action can have monumental effects—details, details.

At any rate, Evan doesn't stick around too long after discovering imperfections in these futures—imperfections ranging from murder to prostitution. The film stresses nurture over nature, and the characters are virtually indistinguishable from one new present to the next. Because of this, the actors have little time to develop their characters personalities and the performances are weak. Over the course of the movie, they become one-dimensional puppets for Evan's screwed-up mind.

Though best enjoyed with one's mind on autopilot, “Butterfly” begs too many questions to be ig-

nored. Evan delves back into his memories, somehow rearranging his own mind such that his life is different, and BAM!—everyone else's lives have radically changed as well. This is never explained, but the audience gets the impression that Evan is in a world wherein only he exists. One wonders had this film been made for \$20,000 instead of \$50 million, if the director would have taken a chance and explored the possibilities of this solipsism variation.

There are some lovely moments, such as when Evan unthinkingly blurts out the entire Greek alphabet while in a world where he is a leader of his school's fraternity.

But the movie is grounded in shock value, which is a shame.

♦ BUTTERFLY, SEE PAGE 6

CD Releases for the week of February 9-16



“AMERICA'S SWEETHEART”  
 Courtney Love



“LUCKY”  
 Melissa Etheridge



“KEEP IT SIMPLE”  
 Keb' Mo'



“BODY LANGUAGE”  
 Kylie Minogue



“QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY”  
 Various Artists



“FEELS LIKE HOME”  
 Norah Jones