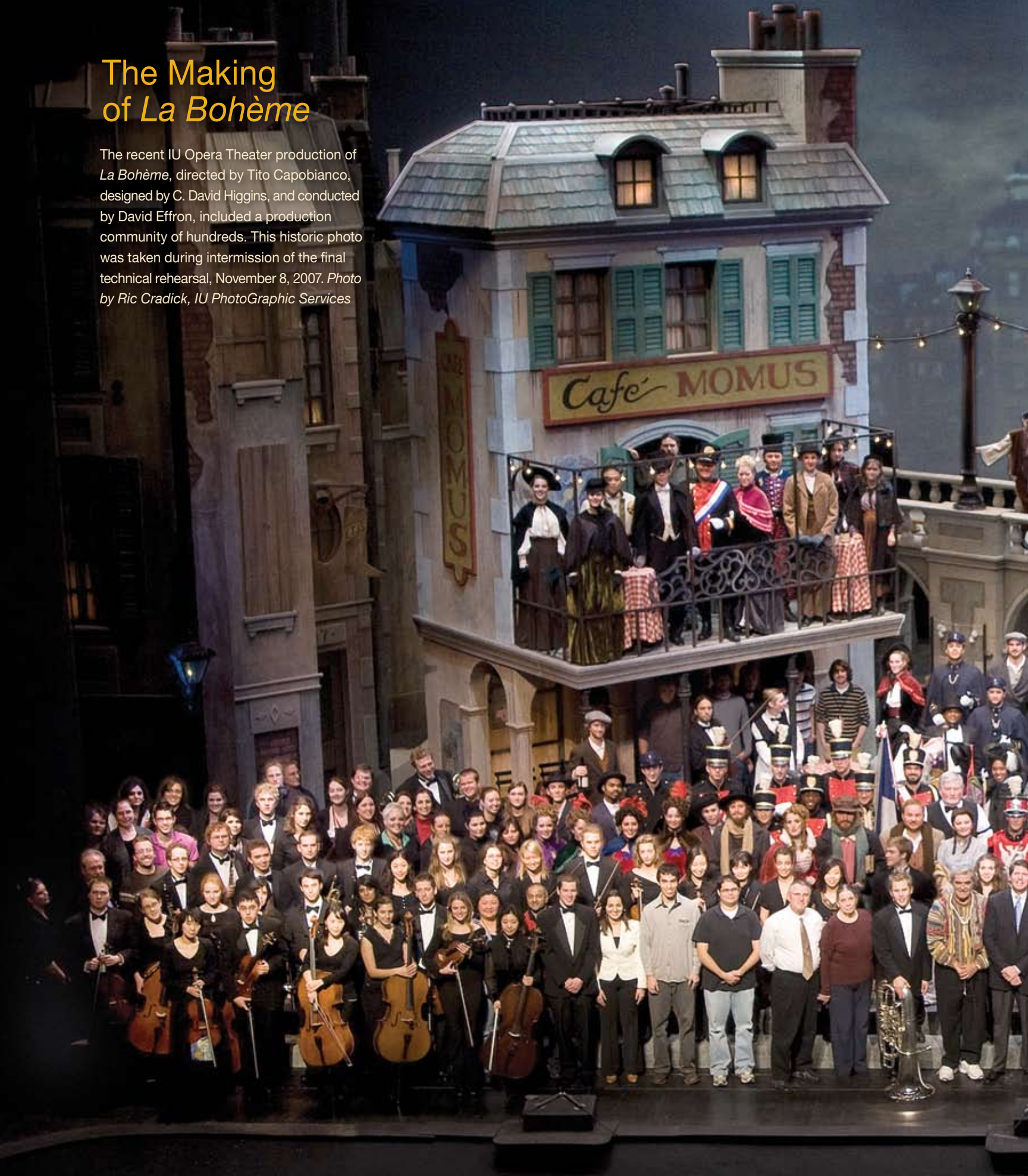


## The Making of *La Bohème*

The recent IU Opera Theater production of *La Bohème*, directed by Tito Capobianco, designed by C. David Higgins, and conducted by David Efron, included a production community of hundreds. This historic photo was taken during intermission of the final technical rehearsal, November 8, 2007. Photo by Ric Cradick, IU PhotoGraphic Services





## Collegiate Premiere of *A Wedding* Marks Season of Firsts for IU Opera and Ballet Theater

Indiana University Opera and Ballet Theater is adding to its list of firsts during the 2007–2008 season.

Among them, the Jacobs School of Music will feature the nation's first collegiate performance of *A Wedding* by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer William Bolcom. Based on Robert Altman's 1978 film about a high society wedding, the production will mark Bolcom's third project with IU Opera Theater. IU Opera delivered critically acclaimed collegiate premieres of Bolcom's *McTeague* and *A View from the Bridge* in 1996 and 2005, respectively. First staged at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2004, *A Wedding* will open the spring portion of the IU Opera & Ballet Theater season in February 2008.

Fall highlights included a new production of Puccini's *La Bohème*, which was overseen by acclaimed guest stage director Tito Capobianco with IU's C. David Higgins, designer, and IU's David Efron, conductor. A cutting-edge set, conceived by Capobianco and Higgins recreated the streets of 19th-century Paris on three towering, intricately detailed, rotating stages, offering audiences an awe-inspiring visual experience equaled only by the beauty of the opera itself.

This season's ballet performances reflect the mission of Michael Vernon, newly appointed chair of the Jacobs School's Ballet Department. (See related sidebar, p. 39.) The London-trained dancer designed a program for the Fall Ballet around influential works by several of the early 20th century's most visionary choreog-

raphers: Vaslav Nijinsky, Isadora Duncan, and Michael Fokine. New choreography by Vernon was featured in this season's fresh production of *The Nutcracker*. An opera-themed Spring Ballet will feature a performance of *Rossini Overtures* with new choreography by Distinguished Professor and ballet icon Violette Verdy.

The IU Opera and Ballet Theater continues to lead the nation in the number of collegiate productions it stages. Its season—including seven fully staged operas and three ballets each year—is traditionally marked by new performances along with perennial favorites.

True to form, the 2007–2008 season also featured opera performances of Verdi's *Rigoletto* and Floyd's *Susannah*. Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Jacques Offenbach's *Les contes d'Hoffmann* are additional operas in the spring 2008 semester.

All performances are held in IU's Musical Arts Center, which boasts a stage second in size only to the Metropolitan Opera in New York City and features technical capabilities that are among the best in the nation.

Pulitzer Prize-winning American composer Ned Rorem selected IU Opera Theater for the world premiere of his new opera *Our Town*, based on the timeless American play by Thornton Wilder, in February 2006.

In March 2005, all-new choreography by Jacques Cesbron debuted in Sergei Prokofiev's full-length ballet *Cinderella* (and returned, by popular demand, in March 2007). ●

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

OPERA & BALLET  
2007-2008 SEASON  
Theater

Opera

- Rigoletto
- Susannah
- La Bohème
- A Wedding
- Le Nozze di Figaro
- Les Contes d'Hoffmann

Ballet

- Perspectives 1900s
- The Nutcracker
- A Night at the Opera (at the Ballet)

Enjoy the Drama!

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# Too Many Sopranos?

By Linda Cajigas

Musical comedy, popular music, spoken dialogue, operetta, opera, and lots of choreography—all revolving around a story about “madcap divas”? Not the usual stuff that operas are made of.

But such was the case with IU Opera Theater’s recent production of *Too Many Sopranos*. Composed by Indiana University faculty member and Opera coach Edwin Penhorwood, with a libretto by Miki Thompson, the work was given its collegiate premiere in February 2007 at the Musical Arts Center in Bloomington.

“Miki was inspired while sitting in an opera workshop at the University of Iowa,” said Penhorwood. “As usual, the men were onstage rehearsing with only one soprano, while all the other sopranos sat watching. Bored and frustrated, she leaned over to another soprano and said, ‘I’m going to write an opera called *Too Many Sopranos*.’ She enrolled in a play-writing course at the

Writer’s Workshop, and that’s how it began.

“She sent me a rough draft of her one-act opera, and I thought it was hilarious... I was recommended [as composer] and readily accepted.

“Miki was easy to work with and worked in almost all of my ideas,” he continued. “. . . It was a great aid that I am married to an opera singer, Costanza Cuccaro, and could observe and hear about all kinds of operatic behavior from opera singers—that helped get the atmosphere just right!”

Penhorwood, a pianist, composer, organist, and vocal coach, joined the Jacobs School faculty in 1993 and is currently the musical director of the Graduate Opera Workshop.

*Too Many Sopranos* has been presented at the NATS Convention and The National Opera Association National



Convention in New York City and has received more than 30 productions. To enjoy a sampling of the opera, go to [music.indiana.edu/iumusiclive](http://music.indiana.edu/iumusiclive). ●

## Vernon Begins New Era With IU Ballet Theater



Indiana University Ballet Theater began a new era when the October 2006 Fall Ballet: *From Balanchine to Baker: An International Evening of Dance* marked Michael Vernon’s official debut as the newly appointed chair of the IU Jacobs

School of Music’s Ballet Department and director of IU Ballet Theater.

2007–2008 is the first complete IU Ballet Theater season under Vernon’s direction and includes the Fall Ballet: *Perspectives 1900s*, the Spring Ballet: *A Night at the Opera (at the Ballet)*, and a fresh production of *The Nutcracker*, with new choreography by Vernon.

An internationally renowned choreographer and pedagogue, Vernon plans to carry on the tradition of excellence and high professional standards that has become synonymous with IU Ballet Theater, while developing a style unique to the company and recognizing the constant evolution of the art form.

“I think that dancers need great teaching and also need to dance great

ballets. Everything needs to be of the highest quality,” said Vernon, who was born in London and trained at the Royal Ballet School. “They need to learn ballets that will challenge them and that they can learn from. It’s also really important for us not just to develop dancers, but also to develop choreographers.

“Teaching is about gathering and sharing knowledge. Even though I have my own strong ideas, I always keep an open mind and think it’s important to learn from every situation. While respecting the past, and cherishing the accomplishments of the present, it’s imperative to develop the art form with the future in mind.”