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CU Denver Partners with Opera Colorado to Create Virtual Reality Experience for Public

Featuring behind-the-scenes footage from Opera Colorado's recent hit production, the "Behind La Bohème" VR experience was created by more than 50 students and faculty from the College of Arts & Media

Free exhibition Opens at NXT STG Collaborative Gallery on December 15

DENVER (Dec. 14, 2017) — Opera Colorado, the College of Arts & Media at the University of Colorado Denver, and virtual reality agency Hypercube have partnered to create the cutting-edge collaboration *Experience La Bohème*—a 360-degree, virtual reality exhibition that takes viewers behind the scenes and onto the stage of a large-scale opera production.

The free exhibition opens on Friday, December 15, at the NXT STG Collaborative Gallery, located across the Buell Theater in the Denver Performing Arts Complex Galleria. *Experience La Bohème* runs through May 2018, allowing thousands of DPAC arts-goers to stop in, put on a virtual reality headset and step into the world of an opera performer.

"Many people are unaware of the thousands of hours that go into mounting an opera, and the work of dozens of behind-the-scenes players in addition to the artists you see and hear on stage or in the orchestra pit," says Opera Colorado General Director Greg Carpenter. "This collaboration with CU Denver's College of Arts & Media gives us an opportunity to share with the public the magic of opera in a whole new way, while also aligning perfectly with Opera Colorado's commitment to education and community partnerships."

Experience La Bohème comes on the heels of Opera Colorado's critically acclaimed production of Puccini's *La Bohème*, and features an exclusive look at the process of getting the production ready for audiences.

While the cast and crew of *La Bohème* were busy in rehearsal and performances, CU Denver professors Michelle Bauer Carpenter and Travis Vermilye worked with 56 of their Digital Design students to create this virtual reality experience.

Teams from the College of Arts & Media captured and edited footage spotlighting nearly every aspect of mounting an opera—from set load-in to wigs and makeup transformations to rehearsals—along with dressing room interviews with opera stars Anya Matanovic (Mimi), Dominick Chenes (Rodolfo), Monica Yunus (Musetta) and Levi Hernandez (Marcello); Opera Colorado Music Director Ari Peltó; and in-demand stage director Matthew Ozawa.

The result combines virtual reality and traditional video footage for an immersive, 360-degree look at grand opera. The *Experience La Bohème* installation also features augmented reality displays by student teams and highlighting additional elements of Opera Colorado’s production.

“The College of Arts & Media’s unique program in Digital Design allows students to integrate creative solutions, visual design and critical thinking with expertise in advanced electronic media,” says Laurence Kaptain, Dean of the College of Arts & Media and a member of the Opera Colorado Board of Directors.

He lauds this collaboration between technology and the arts.

“I’m proud of this affiliation that advances the exciting work of Opera Colorado through the lens of a 21st century vision that is extended by the latest digital technology,” says Kaptain.

The technology used to create *Experience La Bohème* includes traditional filming, augmented reality using Aurasma, and 360 virtual reality capturing devices powered by Hypercube, Unity, Vive, and Oculus Rift. The collaboration includes virtual reality direction by Mark Anton Read.

Experience La Bohème is a collaboration by Opera Colorado, the College of Arts & Media at the University of Colorado Denver, and Hypercube. The NXT STG Collaborative Gallery is a collaboration between the City of Denver Arts and Venues/Denver Performing Arts Complex and CU Denver’s College of Arts & Media.

EXPERIENCE LA BOHÈME
A 360-degree, virtual reality exhibition

Opening Reception

Friday, December 15, 2017

5 – 8 pm

Free

Exhibition Dates/Hours

December 15, 2017, through May 2018

Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays: 4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Saturdays and Sundays: 12:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Location

NXT STG Collaborative Gallery
at the Denver Performing Arts Complex
1025 13th St, Denver, CO 80202

For directions and information, visit <https://www.nextstagecu.org/>

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ABOUT OPERA COLORADO

Opera Colorado celebrates its 35th anniversary during the 2017-2018 season, having served as a cornerstone of Denver’s cultural community since 1981. In addition to its mainstage performances at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House each season, Opera Colorado affirms its commitment to the future of the art form by annually presenting new works; with its nationally recognized Young Artists Program that trains the next generation of opera performers; and by each year reaching more than 38,000 students and adults through its many education and community engagement programs throughout the Rocky Mountain region. The 2017-2018 season features Puccini’s *La Bohème* and Verdi’s *Falstaff* at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House, and the world premiere of *Steal a Pencil for Me* by composer Gerald Cohen and librettist Deborah Brevoort at the Wolf Theatre at the Mizel Arts and Culture Center at the JCC. For more information, visit www.operacolorado.org.