

UN CONCERTO INCREDIBILE

Vocal senior **Arielle Ward** and band senior **Nihar Bhavsar** collaborated on the first opera piece arranged for Prism

By Ben Seelig

Murmurs fill the Kravis Center as the spotlight reveals 18 musicians and vocalists, the largest student-run Prism group in the history of its showing. Vocal senior **Arielle Ward**, out of the silence, belted out the first words of “Quando Me’n Vo” from the opera “La Boheme.” She portrayed the rebellious lover Musette.

“My passion for opera had just started to fester over the summer,” Ward said. “(Band senior **Nihar Bhavsar**) came up to me and (said), ‘I want to do an opera piece with you,’ because he knows I’ve been training for that. We talked over the summer, trying to find which song to do, but we kept coming back to ‘Quando Me’n Vo.’”

While Ward was organizing the vocalists together, Bhavsar had the responsibility to gather all of the instrumentalists. He reached out to the group to find which rehearsal dates worked, but he still had to find a space large enough to fit the group.

“We wanted to sound great, so that the teachers would be amazed by what we accomplished, especially because we did it without a conductor, so that means we had to line up all the musicians with the cues from the vocalists,” Bhavshar said. “A lot of the times we did it after school, and we would rehearse for about an hour and we would do rehearsals discussing the different cuts, discussing what we should do by opening up different recordings of copies.”

Bhavshar and Ward quickly realized how absent performers became a problem. If the entirety of a group was not present for their Prism audition, the chances of getting in were low.

“Most of us are seniors, so we all have these habits after four years. This is how the vocal department does things, this is how the band department is and how the strings are. So getting everyone to agree on the same professional terms was a bit of a challenge, but mostly, that can be fixed in rehearsals,” vocal senior **Andrew Gellen**, who portrayed Roldovo, said.

On the day of the concert, the group began to set up early. The performers remember the whispers and gasps when the group was revealed in its full size; however, the biggest reaction

was from the plate smash. In the story, the plate was Musette's grand entrance into song and symbolized her frustration with the loveless relationship.

"I wasn't worried because I knew we'd worked on this so hard. I walked on stage with confidence, and I was just ready to play my role. Musetta is really confident, so I just took a part of her and made sure to really show that character in myself," Ward said. "Portraying this character was life changing for me, because I was able to tap into that part of myself that I didn't know was there."