

Talia Pirron

Fall 2022 Outcome Report

This semester I am studying abroad in Paris where I am so lucky to have access to a myriad of artistic and cultural opportunities. As music courses aren't offered in my host university, I wanted to take the initiative to craft my own musical education while living here. I decided to take advantage of the access to live music that I have at my fingertips and put together a season of concerts, operas, and musicals that would allow me to live performances of an art form I have studied for years at some of the highest levels available. With my Miller Arts Mini Grant, I have thus far been able to see operas at the Paris Opera, Royal Opera House in London, Six the Musical on the West End, and multiple concerts at the Paris Philharmonic and Paris Opera.

Seeing La Boheme at the Royal Opera House was an absolutely surreal experience. I had seen the opera once before in my hometown of Richmond, VA as one of my first ever opera-going experiences, and so it felt very surreal to see it for the second time at one of the most renowned opera houses in the world. The opera house itself was absolutely magnificent, and everything from the orchestra to the sets to the singers themselves were perfect. It was so inspiring to see a live opera, and I realized this was the first full live opera I'd seen since before the pandemic, so in almost three years at this point. I also saw Six the Musical on the West End while in London, which was also such an incredible experience. It was cool getting to see both of these productions in one trip, as they couldn't be more different musically and theoretically; La Boheme is a 19th-century opera that has been performed thousands of times throughout the world, by one of the most famous operatic composers of all time, and is a staple of musical and opera repertoire. Six, on the other hand, features pop-based music, and is new and cutting-edge;

really the future of musical theater and music performance. The cast featured six insanely talented performers who also were diverse in terms of ethnic background, body type, and vocal type, something you don't often get to see for female leads in professional performance spaces. I was really inspired by both of these performances, and am glad I had the opportunity to experience these shows live.

I also attended two different recitals at the Paris Philharmonic as well as a recital by the Paris Opera featuring chamber musicians from their orchestra. I am so glad I've had this opportunity to be able to see more orchestral and instrumental chamber music works, as the majority of my music knowledge thus far is in the opera and classical voice world. One of these performances actually did feature a soprano soloist, as well as piano and a string quartet. This was also cool to see, as I haven't seen a lot of chamber music involving singers as well. They alternated who was featured for the majority of the concert, but the finale involved the singer, string quartet, and piano all playing together and it was absolutely gorgeous. As I am staying in Paris through January, I have tickets lined up for the winter holidays as well. Unfortunately I am unable to see *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Opera Garnier as the tickets sold out too quickly, but I am seeing a concert by the orchestra and soloists of opera arias and duets, which should be lovely. I am also seeing *Carmen* at Opera Bastille, as well as a few other orchestra and chamber concerts. And for Christmas I will also be seeing a live concert of Handel's *Messiah*, which I am extremely excited for as I've never seen it live but have sung the Hallelujah Chorus every year.



Royal Opera House, London



Six the Musical, London West End