

Giacomo Puccini

LA RONDINE

Saturday, January 10

Conductor
Marco Armiliato

Production
Nicolas Joël

Staged By
Stephen Barlow

Set Designer
Ezio Frigerio

Costume Designer
Franca Squarciapino

Lighting Designer
Duane Schuler

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Opera **HD**
LIVE

MAGDA **Angela Gheorghiu**

LISETTE **Lisette Oropesa**

RUGGERO **Roberto Alagna**

PRUNIER **Marius Brenciu**

RAMBALDO **Samuel Ramey**

YVETTE **Monica Yunus**

BIANCA **Alyson Cambridge**

SUZY **Elizabeth DeShong**

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Act I Magda, mistress of the rich banker Rambaldo is serving tea to her friends as the poet Prunier lectures Yvette, Bianca, and Suzy about the latest Parisian fashion for sentimental love. No one except Magda takes him seriously. Prunier starts to tell a story he has written about a girl, Doretta, who rejects the love of a king, but is unable to finish it. Magda improvises an ending to Doretta's dream for him by making up a second verse telling how the girl rejects riches for the love of a student ("Chi il bel sogno di Doretta"). She thinks about her own flirtations and recalls an encounter with a young man at Bullier's dance hall. Rambaldo says he knows what love means and gives Magda a pearl necklace, which she accepts without changing her opinion that love has nothing to do with wealth. Prunier offers to read Magda's palm and predicts that she will go south in pursuit of romance and happiness—just like "la rondine," the swallow. Ruggero, a newcomer to Paris, is excited to be in the city. Rambaldo asks the others where Ruggero should spend his first night in Paris. They decide on Bullier's, and Ruggero leaves to go there. Lisette, Magda's maid, and the other women flirt with Ruggero and send him on his way. When the guests depart, Magda impulsively decides to go to Bullier, and rushes off to change into a simpler dress. Lisette creeps in dressed in Magda's clothes and is intercepted by Prunier who furtively flirts with her. They leave together. Magda emerges for an adventure at Bullier's, her mind full of Prunier's prophesy and Doretta's dream.

Act II Bullier's is alive with a noisy crowd of students, flower girls, artists, soldiers, and aristocrats. Ruggero sits alone at a table. When Magda enters, she is immediately surrounded by a group of students, but she says she already has a date and joins Ruggero, who doesn't recognize her. She introduces herself as Paulette. When she teases him about his probable love affairs, he replies that should he ever love a woman, it would be forever. While they talk and dance, they both realize that they have fallen in love with each other. Prunier and Lisette arrive. She is startled by the sight of Magda, but Prunier, understanding the situation, convinces her that it is someone else with a chance resemblance (Ensemble: "Bevo al tuo fresco sorriso"). Suddenly Rambaldo appears, and Prunier asks Lisette to keep Ruggero out of sight. Magda refuses Prunier's pleas to escape, and Rambaldo confronts her demanding an explanation. She replies that she has found true love and is going to leave him. As the waiters clear the now empty dance hall, Ruggero returns and comforts Magda. They leave together to start a new life.

Act III Magda and Ruggero have been living in a hotel on the Riviera, but their money is running out. Ruggero says he has written to his mother for her consent to their marriage and paints an idyllic picture of his family's home in the country. Magda is dismayed that her lover doesn't know anything of her past. After he has left, Prunier and Lisette arrive, quarreling: he had tried to make her a singer but her debut was a disaster. Magda tells Lisette she would be glad to take her into service once more. Prunier, who can't imagine Magda continuing her fantasy life, delivers a message from Rambaldo: he is ready to welcome her back on any terms. Prunier leaves as Ruggero returns with a letter from his mother. She is delighted that her son has found a good and virtuous bride who will be worthy of his children. Unable to keep silent any longer, Magda tells a stunned Ruggero that she is "contaminated." She can be his mistress but never his wife. He protests and begs Magda not to leave him. Magda, heartbroken, slowly makes her way out of his life.