

When **Sebastian Haboczki** ran into James Madison University voice professor Kevin McMillan while getting an oil change in London, Ontario, it was a conversation he could not ignore. Haboczki knew McMillan from his time at the University of Western Ontario (Western University), where he had recently earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in music.

Fortunately, Haboczki's parents—his mom, a conductor, his dad, a cellist—“introduced him to all the main languages” growing up. Such exposure has proved especially helpful to Haboczki's musical endeavors, which began when he was “a little boy.”

Haboczki grew up playing the piano and served as Music Director at a church, where he played the organ, starting at age 14. He taught himself guitar in high school and played in “a lot of bands.” He earned a scholarship in vocal performance to Western University, and made the decision to “study singing seriously” during his third year—a decision that would force him to give up his other major, astrophysics. “I wanted to do astrophysics because I loved space, but figured math would always be there.”

That decision has sent Haboczki on a path he could not have orchestrated himself. He sang the lead role (Rodolfo) in *La Bohème* at the Forbes Center in the fall, which he called “a really big sing, but a lot of fun.” Haboczki has also performed in *Rita* (Pepe), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Lyzander), *The Elixir of Love* (Nemorino), *Béatrice et Bénédict* (Bénédict), *Die Fledermaus* (Alfred) and *La Traviata* (Alfredo).

He has sung in summer festivals in Italy—and in Amsterdam, where he made his debut at the Concertgebouw. The “crazy and cool” experience gave Haboczki the chance to perform in an “absolutely stunning” venue while continuing to build his operatic resume.