

For immediate release April 27, 2009

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Boston Lyric Opera Awards Neal Ferreira the 2009 Stephen Shrestinian Award for Excellence

Boston, MA — On April 22, 2009, Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) presented the 2009 Stephen Shrestinian Award for Excellence to tenor Neal Ferreira before a gathering of Board members, patrons, singers, guests and staff at the final dress rehearsal for *Don Giovanni*. The award is presented annually to a member of BLO's chorus who has demonstrated exceptional artistic growth and great promise for continued professional achievement.

The Stephen Shrestinian Award for Excellence, a cash award, was created to assist young artists with further professional development and training. The recipient may use the award for BLO-approved advancement activities such as coaching a new role, taking a movement, dance, or acting class, or paying a portion of graduate school tuition. "I am thrilled to receive the Stephen Shrestinian Award from Boston Lyric Opera this year," noted Mr. Ferreira. "I feel humbled to be recognized by this company to which I owe so much already, and it is an honor that it would like to support me in my career moving forward."

"Neal exhibits great talent and potential both on and off the stage," said Esther Nelson, General & Artistic Director of BLO. "He has proven to be a valuable contributor and beloved performer in productions and educational outreach activities. Through this award, we are pleased to support his professional growth over the next few years."

The Newburyport, MA resident made his principal role debut with BLO last November in the roles of Andrés and the red-haired scientist Spalanzani in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* (*The Tales of Hoffmann*). His performance was so well received that Opera Colorado contracted him to reprise both roles in its production this fall. Prior to *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, Mr. Ferreira sang with the chorus in many recent BLO productions and rejoins the chorus this month in the Company's brand new *Don Giovanni*. He spent March and April traveling New England as the evil Monostatos in BLO's Opera for Young Audiences production of *The Magic Flute* (see related article [here](#)). Mr. Ferreira has also appeared locally with American Repertory Theatre, Boston Midsummer Opera, Guerilla Opera, Longwood Opera, New England Light Opera and Opera Boston. In 2005 he received his Master of Music degree from the New England Conservatory of Music.

The Stephen Shrestinian Award was established in the 1998-1999 Season by BLO in memory of long-time BLO chorus member Stephen Shrestinian following his sudden death in 1996 at the age of 29. A

gifted young tenor, Mr. Shrestinian was a regular member of the BLO chorus and sang comprimario and supporting roles with the Company. The award is funded by relatives, friends, colleagues, members of the BLO chorus and audience, and others who knew and admired him. Past recipients of the award include Joseph Valone, Neil Nelson, Alan Schneider, Heidi Stober, Stephanie Chigas, Laura Choi Stuart, Andrea Coleman, and Erica Brookhyser.

BLO continues to raise funds for this award. For further information about the Stephen Shrestinian Award for Excellence, or to contribute to the fund, please contact Heather Laplante, Development Coordinator, at 617.542.4912 x230 or donorservices@blo.org. BLO is a member of The Boston Foundation Endowment Partners Program.

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Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) is New England's largest opera company. Founded in 1976, BLO is recognized for its artistically excellent productions of a diverse repertoire that entertain and inspire audiences and feature emerging operatic talent. BLO produces three mainstage productions at the Citi Performing Arts CenterSM Shubert Theatre in Boston and a production of a fully staged, one-hour English version of a popular Opera for Young Audiences throughout New England. BLO's programs are funded, in part, by a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. blo.org