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Contact person: Mia Howard
Marketing and Communications Manager
617.542.4912 x240 or mhoward@blo.org

How to Make the Most of an Opera Season Opener

2008-2009 Season Opens November 7 with Production That Has Intriguing History

Boston, MA —Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) is offering a variety of events to help new and long-time opera aficionados prepare for the Company's unique 2008-2009 Season opener, Jacques Offenbach's *Les contes d'Hoffmann (The Tales of Hoffmann)* which runs November 7-18. This supernatural production has an interesting history and the opera itself breaks away from traditional opera formulas, which is why attending BLO's upcoming events are especially rewarding.

In *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, the poet Hoffmann recounts the pursuit of his greatest loves and how the meddling of a supernatural villain brought each affair to a bitter end. Offenbach's famous music includes the "Barcarolle," *one of the most memorable melodies ever written*. Hear a sample at http://www.blo.org/season0809_hoffmann.html. His sudden death before he finished the opera resulted in various interpretations being performed over the several decades. BLO's production is a return to the original conceptualization of the masterful composer's vision.

The Hoffmann experience:

Late 1800s-inspired glass and steel scenery paired with MC Escher-esque designs evoke the contrast between the industrial grace and grandeur of an era that created the Eiffel Tower and the unhinged delirium Hoffmann encounters in each of his affairs. Our cast, conducted by Keith Lockhart and directed by Renaud Doucet, has the dexterity to seamlessly transition among the various tales of this intricately woven production.

Three ways to learn about Hoffmann before Opening Night:

- 1. October 28, 2008, 7pm: Tuesday Night at the Opera** – FREE one-hour evening presentation with Liz Perlman from Costume Works, who will showcase some of the outrageous and amazing costumes from *Les contes d'Hoffmann* at the Rabb Auditorium, Boston Public Library, Copley Square. For additional information, call 617.542.4912 x242 or email education@blo.org. See sketches of some of the costumes at http://www.blo.org/ed_events_tuesday.html.
- 2. October 31, 2008, 10am-1pm: Opera Insights** – Enjoy a light brunch in the beautiful Founder's Room at Pine Manor College while taking an in-depth look at *Les contes d'Hoffmann* with returning opera expert Richard Beams. The lecture is packed with background information on the music, text, themes, and characters. This insider knowledge helps all opera goers optimize their experience by preparing themselves to enjoy every subtlety of the performance.

Fee \$40 per session; BLO season subscriber discount: \$99 for the series of three

Location Founders Room, Pine Manor College, Chestnut Hill

Register Register at https://blo.org/ed_register.html or call Audience Services at 617.542.6772.

Questions 617.542.4912 x242 or email education@blo.org

3. November 7, 12, 14, 18, 2008 at 6:30pm; November 9 & 16 at 2pm: Opera Previews – FREE for ticket holders. For last minute preparation on performance night, join BLO for a half-hour lecture on the opera's music and characters before experiencing them live. Opera Previews start one hour before curtain (6:30pm for evening performances, 2pm for matinees) right in the theatre. Previews are led by Elizabeth Seitz of the Boston Conservatory and Teresa Neff of MIT and the Boston Conservatory. It's amazing how a little knowledge can greatly enhance enjoyment of the opera experience.

Location The Citi Performing Arts CenterSM Shubert Theatre, Boston

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These engaging programs are part of BLO's commitment to inspire new audiences about opera.

About the production:

Offenbach's *Les contes d'Hoffmann*: November 7, 9, 12, 14, 16, 18, 2008

- **Hoffmann:** Gerard Powers, *tenor* (2006 *Madama Butterfly*)
- **Olympia, Antonia, Giulietta, Stella:** Playing all four roles is rising coloratura star and Boston University graduate Georgia Jarman, *soprano**
- **Nicklausse, The Muse:** Michèle Losier, *mezzo-soprano**
- **Lindorf, Coppélius, Dr. Miracle, Dapertutto:** BLO audience favorite, Gaétan Laperrière, *baritone* (2005 *Lucie de Lammermoor*, 2004 *Tosca*, 2001 *Don Carlos*, 1998 *Werther*)
- **Offenbach, Cochenille, Frantz, Pitichinaccio:** BLO audience favorite, Boston University graduate, and Medford resident Matthew DiBattista, *tenor* (Goro in 2006 *Madama Butterfly*) reprises roles performed this summer with Co-Producer Opera Theatre of St. Louis
- **Conductor:** Keith Lockhart (2006 *Madama Butterfly*, 2004 *Tosca*)
- **Director & Design Team:** Renaud Doucet & André Barbe (BLO's critically acclaimed *Thaïs* in 2006)

*BLO debut

Ticket Information

- Single tickets start at \$33 and can be purchased at 866.348.9738 (TTY 888.889.8587), citicenter.org, or in person at the Citi Performing Arts Center Box Office, 270 Tremont Street in Boston.
- Discounts on group tickets of 10 or more are available by calling BLO's Audience Services at 617.542.6772.
- Half price student tickets are available in advance in person at the Citi Performing Arts Center Box Office, 270 Tremont Street in Boston and day of show at the Shubert Theatre box office with a valid student ID.

For more information and updates on Boston Lyric Opera's 2008-2009 Season, adult education programs and special events, please visit blo.org.

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Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) is New England's favorite 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 school children and families throughout New England. BLO's programs are funded, in part, by a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. blo.org