



BOSTON LYRIC OPERA

Esther Nelson, General & Artistic Director

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Boston Lyric Opera Bestows Local Singer with Award for Excellence

Boston, MA — On April 21, 2010, Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) presented the 2010 Stephen Shrestinian Award for Excellence to soprano Meredith Hansen before a gathering of Board members, patrons, singers, guests and staff at the final dress rehearsal for *Idomeneo, re di Creta*. 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. "It is such an exciting honor to be the 2010 recipient of the Stephen Shrestinian Award for Excellence," noted Ms. Hansen. "This vote of confidence from a company so near and dear to me is extremely encouraging and will enable me to further my career development by working with some of the top professionals in the opera field. My deepest thanks go to the Shrestinian family and to Boston Lyric Opera."

"Meredith is a wonderful and engaging artist," said Esther Nelson, General & Artistic Director of BLO. "Her professionalism, commitment to BLO's performances and patrons on stage and at community events, and her enormous talent made her an ideal choice for this year's award. We are delighted that it will help make additional training opportunities possible."

The Dorchester, MA resident and Cohasset, MA native made her principal role debut with BLO last November as *Frasquita* in *Carmen*. Prior to that appearance, Ms. Hansen performed with BLO's chorus in five mainstage productions, and sang the roles of First Lady and Queen of the Night throughout New England in the 2005 BLO Opera for Young Audiences production of *The Magic Flute*. In addition to frequent appearances with New England symphonies and opera companies, Ms. Hansen recently gave performances in Boston's Symphony Hall and New York's Carnegie Hall with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in their presentation of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

The Stephen Shrestinian Award for Excellence 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 also 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 Neal Ferreira, Joseph Valone, Erica Brookhyser, Andrea Coleman, Laura Choi Stuart, Stephanie Chigas, Heidi Stober, Alan Schneider, and Neil Nelson. BLO continues to raise funds for this award. For further information about, or to contribute to the Stephen Shrestinian Award for Excellence, please contact Heather Laplante, Annual Fund Manager, 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, an Opera Annex production in a found space, and 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