



BOSTON LYRIC OPERA

Esther Nelson, General & Artistic Director

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Boston Lyric Opera Announces Its 2010-2011 Season

Puccini's
Tosca
November 5-16, 2010
BLO adaptation of
Scottish Opera's
production

Ullmann's
***The Emperor
of Atlantis,
or Death Quits***
With a prologue by Richard
Beaudoin—a BLO
commission and world
premiere
February 1-6, 2011
BLO premiere and new
BLO production

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Opera production

Britten's
***A Midsummer
Night's Dream***
April 29-May 10, 2011
BLO premiere and new
BLO production

BOSTON, MA – Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) announces its 2010-2011 Season today with a lineup of new productions, a world premiere of a commissioned work, and adaptations of classics. Nationally and internationally renowned artists signed on with BLO to be part of the four operas, which are intended to captivate audiences of all levels of opera experience and bring them closer to the multidimensional art form.

"Great operas elicit strong emotion. I want to offer our audience the enjoyment of the familiar great classics, provide the opportunity to be moved by the lesser known great works, and experience the excitement of exploring new works," observes Esther Nelson, BLO's General & Artistic Director. "In this season, we will continue with our reputation of strong casting, bringing to Boston a wide range of the best singers, conductors, stage directors, and designers."

Ticket prices will not increase over the 2009-2010 Season. Supplementary programming in various venues throughout the Season with partners such as the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Boston Public Library will further enhance opera's vital role in Boston's cultural community.

Tosca

November 5, 7m, 10, 12, 14m, 16, 2010

At the Citi Performing Arts CenterSM Shubert Theatre, Boston

Music by Giacomo Puccini | Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica,

after Victorien Sardou's 1887 play, *La Tosca*

Sung in Italian with projected English translation

A Boston Lyric Opera adaptation of a Scottish Opera production

In this Puccini favorite, tension and agony are reflected on a personal level in the passionate struggles of the imprisoned Cavaradossi and Tosca, his beautiful, jealous lover. There are few good choices when life, death, and dignity are on the line.

The role of the diva Floria Tosca will be performed by **Jill Gardner**, who first appeared at BLO as Mimi in the Company's special *BRAVO! Bohème* performance in November 2007. *Opera News* noted her "full sound, with a particularly rich bloom in the middle register...Her commitment and passion...and her ability to convey vocally the slightest nuance of emotion made for gripping theatre."

Diego Torre takes on the role of Tosca's lover, Mario Cavaradossi. *The Washington Times* observed, "his passion was real, his heartbreak was immense, and his commanding, gloriously sculpted instrument makes him an up-and-coming talent to be watched." Mr. Torre's 2009-2010 Season included Met performances as the Messenger in *Aida* and Federico in *Stiffelio*. He will soon perform Masaniello in *La Mulette de Portici* for Dessau Opera, Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Savonlinna, and cover for Plácido Domingo in the title role of *Il Postino* at Los Angeles Opera. **Bradley Garvin** will sing opposite Ms. Gardner and Mr. Torre as Baron Scarpia. *Opera Magazine* credits him with "a big, powerful, clear and expressive voice, which together with his acting skills will take him far." Winner of the George London Vocal Competition and the Plácido Domingo International Vocal Competition, Mr. Garvin will also appear at the Met in its 2010-2011 Season.

Anton Belov, seen most recently with BLO as the Wigmaker in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, will perform Angelotti. **T. Steven Smith**, who sings throughout New England this spring as Doctor Bartolo in BLO's Opera for Young Audiences production of *The Barber of Seville*, will take on the role of the Sacristan. Spoletta will be performed by **Neal Ferreira**, recently seen in *Ariadne auf Naxos* as the Officer, and in BLO's upcoming new production of *Idomeneo, re di Creta* as the High Priest. *Tosca* will be conducted by **Andrew Bisantz**, who received praise for his work in BLO's new production of *The Turn of the Screw* at the Park Plaza Castle in February 2010. Stage direction will be provided by **David Lefkovich** following the original production by **Anthony Besch**, with set and costume designs by **Peter Rice**, and lighting by **Paul Hackenmueller**.

Opera Annex: *The Emperor of Atlantis, or Death Quits*

With a prologue by Richard Beaudoin—a special BLO commission and world premiere

February 1, 2, 4, 5, 6m, 2011

At The Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA, 527 Tremont Street, Boston

Music by Viktor Ullmann | Libretto by poet Petr Kien | Sung in English

BLO premiere and new BLO production

An Emperor unleashes total war and orders destruction and death. But Death refuses. Where does that leave the Emperor and those he seeks to annihilate? In 1943, composer Viktor Ullmann and poet Petr Kien were prisoners in the concentration camp Terezin, where they created this almost inconceivably wry and touching opera. They died at Auschwitz, but their opera survives as an allusive, haunting, texturally rich testament to their spirit. Expressing through music what words alone cannot convey, the opera is in equal measure dark, funny and poignant as it juxtaposes the brutality and fragility of existence with a celebration of life's purpose. BLO will present a new production of this opera by transforming the theater space of The Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA with a nontraditional approach.

The performance will include the world premiere of a prologue composed by Richard Beaudoin and specially commissioned by BLO. The prologue reflects BLO's larger vision of fostering new work. Mr. Beaudoin notes, "I see my work not as a direct meditation on Terezin, nor as a way to re-highlight the plight of Holocaust survivors; rather, I am conceiving this work as a reflection of what it is like to live *now*, in 2010, as a descendant of

these important events—the extent to which they are still inconceivable to us, and the extent which we still cannot (or will not) find the works to discuss the personal side of that historical period. Without sentimentalism or nostalgia, I believe this new work will be a record of our current and ongoing attempts to come to terms with such memories.”

Kevin Burdette, who doubles as Death and the Loudspeaker, was praised by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as “a tour de force of vocal splendor.” His 2009-2010 Season included appearances at the Met in Strauss’ *Elektra* and in Shostakovich’s *The Nose*. Locally, he performed the role of Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* with Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, and debuted with Boston Baroque as Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*. The Emperor will be performed by **Andrew Wilkowske**, whom the *Washington Post* called a “show stealer,” and the *Virginian-Pilot* said that he “showed a fine voice, and engaging stage presence.” Mr. Wilkowske sang the role of Noah in Minnesota Opera’s world premiere of *The Grapes of Wrath*, and is included in the cast recording of the opera. He recently sang the Scientist under the baton of Plácido Domingo in the North American premiere of *The Fly* at Los Angeles Opera, and was a Regional Finalist of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

John Mac Master will appear as Harlekin. Opera Canada stated that he “made his Met debut as the most riveting Met *Canio* in recent memory, sung unstintingly and acted with a fierce commitment.” Mr. Mac Master also performed Tristan for Welsh National Opera and the Met. Of his Glimmerglass debut in *Pagliacci*, the *New York Times* said, “the real news here was John Mac Master’s portrayal of Canio. A Canadian tenor with a huge, powerful voice, he summoned every bit of the pathos and violence the role demands.” **Kathryn Skemp**, who debuted with BLO as Flora in February’s new production of *The Turn of the Screw*, will return as Bubikopf. **Jamie Van Eyck** will make her Company debut in the role of Drummer, and **Julius Ahn**, who made his BLO debut in *Ariadne auf Naxos* as Dancing Master/Brighella, will sing the role of A Solider. OBIE Award winning Stage Director **David Schweizer** is known for his work at the Huntington Theatre Company, New York City Opera, and abroad. Sets will be designed by **Caleb Wertenbaker**, costumes by **Nancy Leary** (who designed for BLO’s *The Turn of the Screw*) and lighting by **Christopher Akerlind**.

BLO’s Opera Annex is a fully staged production designed for an alternative space outside the traditional opera theater. It is separate from the mainstage season. The Opera Annex program was introduced in BLO’s 2009-2010 Season and quickly sold out.

Agrippina

March 11, 13m, 16, 18, 20m, 22, 2011

At the Citi Performing Arts CenterSM Shubert Theatre, Boston

Music by George Frideric Handel | Libretto by Vincenzo Grimani

Sung in Italian, with projected English translation

A Glimmerglass Opera/New York City Opera production

Agrippina wants her rotten son to be the emperor of Rome. What’s a mother to do? She promises anything to everyone standing in her way: Nero himself, an ambitious courtesan, a general, a couple of fawning sycophants, half the Roman Senate, and her husband, current emperor Claudius. The fresh soaring music by Handel showcases crazy, hothouse humanity.

The title role will be performed by **Caroline Worra**, who makes her BLO debut as Elettra in the upcoming new production of *Idomeneo, re di Creta*. A 2007 Grammy nominee, Ms. Worra was called “a revelation” by Brian Kellow of *Opera News*, who said that her Jenny in *The Mines of Sulphur* at Wexford Opera Festival “provide[d] the evening’s terrifying climax...with a superb soprano and solid technique...she delivered the final twist with fearsome

power, landing on a molten high B that produced an almost physical reaction from the audience." David Shengold, also of *Opera News*, notes Ms. Worra is "a serious artist destined for international stages."

Countertenor **David Trudgen** will take on Nerone. The *Chicago Tribune* observed that Mr. Trudgen "could be the next generation's answer to David Daniels. He sang with a beautiful legato, fine musicality and uncommon expressive conviction." The *Wall Street Journal* called his performance "one of the more musically convincing moments of the show." **Kathleen Kim** will sing Poppea. Of her portrayal as Olympia in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* at the Met in December, the *New York Times'* Anthony Tommasini stated that Ms. Kim "excelled in Olympia's showpiece aria, singing with pinpoint pitch, bright tone and impressive accuracy." *Opera News* calls her "spectacular," the *Chicago Sun-Times* "a revelation" and "tiny dynamo," and the *Chicago Tribune* added she "nailed her stratospheric coloratura aria with a precise, penetrating soprano."

Anthony Roth Costanzo and **Christian Van Horn**, both recent Metropolitan Opera National Council Grand Prize winners, will sing Ottone and Claudio, respectively. Mr. Costanzo was also a recent 2010 George London Foundation Award winner. **José Álvarez** will be Narciso. **David Cushing**, most recently seen as Truffaldino in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, will perform the role of Lesbo, and **David McFerrin** will make his BLO debut as Pallante.

Conductor **Gary Thor Wedow** will lead BLO's orchestra. Richard Dyer noted in a *Boston Globe* review that "years in opera houses have taught him how to make this music theatrical – and how to accommodate singers while challenging them. His work was knowledgeable, vital and full of the smell of candlelight and greasepaint." Heidi Waleson of the *Wall Street Journal* observed that he "led a vibrant performance, skillfully balancing the voices and the orchestra" at NYCO's 2009 *Don Giovanni*. A former Associate Conductor of Boston's Handel and Haydn Society and faculty member at the New England Conservatory, the Boston Conservatory, and Boston University, Mr. Wedow is currently a faculty member of The Juilliard School.

Agrippina will also feature the work of Stage Director **Lillian Groag** and Set Designer (and BLO Artistic Advisor) **John Conklin**, who collaborated on BLO's April 2010 production of *Idomeneo, re di Creta*. Costumes are designed by **Jess Goldstein**. **Robert Wierzel** will return to design the lighting after having worked on BLO's *Idomeneo, re di Creta*, and the 2009 productions of *Rusalka* and *Don Giovanni*.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

April 29, May 1m, 4, 6, 8m, 10, 2011

At the Citi Performing Arts CenterSM Shubert Theatre, Boston

Music by Benjamin Britten

Libretto adapted by the composer and Peter Pears from William Shakespeare's play

Sung in English with projected titles

BLO premiere and new BLO production

The thrill of the chase is so much more intriguing when Shakespeare pens the words and Britten adds his touching, edgy and very funny score that leaves characters wondering whether they are in a dreamscape or a nightmare.

Helena will be performed by Met regular **Susanna Phillips**, who was praised for her portrayal of Donna Anna in BLO's 2009 *Don Giovanni*. The *Washington Post* applauded her "gorgeous, well-supported clarity," and the *Chicago Tribune* called her voice "raptly beautiful, deeply affecting." **John Gaston** will sing the role of Oberon. The *Miami Herald* praised his "consistently sensitive phrasing and dazzling agility," with coloratura delivered "at a staggering clip with spotless clarity." Of his appearance in the same role at the Manhattan School of Music, the *New*

York Times applauded his “velvety tone and a regal serenity in a performance that was one of the highlights of the production.”

Oberon’s queen, Tytania, will be sung by **Nadine Sierra**, who was a recent 2010 George London Foundation Award winner. She was also one of only four winners of the 2009 Met National Councils Auditions. Her voice began gaining attention when, at 14 years old, Ms. Sierra became a young artist in the Palm Beach Opera Young Artist Program, and two years later made her debut there as the Sandman in Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*. In 2005, she performed with Boston’s From the Top, and a year later she received the Silver Award from Deborah Voigt at the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts program. In 2007, she was the youngest first-place winner of the Marilyn Horne Foundation Award.

Andrew Shore, who will debut with BLO as Bottom, is a favorite at English National Opera, where he was hailed as “one of the best operatic baritones of our time” by *Gramophone*, a “comic gemstone” by *The Stage*, and “peerless” by *The Daily Telegraph*. **Darren Stokes** will sing Theseus, after having last been seen with BLO as Zuniga in the Company’s *Carmen* in 2009. **Heather Johnson** will perform the role of Hermia, after having sung with BLO as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* in 2009. She will be joined by **Chad A. Johnson** as Lysander; **Matthew Worth** as Demetrius; **Ann McMahon Quintero** as Hippolyta; **Karim Sulayman** as Puck; and **Matthew DiBattista** (Offenbach, Cochenille, Franz, Pittichinaccio in BLO’s 2008 *Les contes d’Hoffmann*), **Neal Ferreira**, **Andrew Garland** (last seen as Dancairo in BLO’s 2009 *Carmen*), **T. Steven Smith** and **Liam Moran** as The Rustics.

Emmy Nominee, producer, playwright and Stage Director **Tazewell Thompson** will return after directing BLO’s *Don Giovanni*. His play *Constant Star* saw 14 national productions and garnered 17 awards for Best Musical and Best Musical/Ensemble/ Direction. He will collaborate with returning Set Designer **John Conklin** and Lighting Designer **Robert Wierzel**, and will be joined by Costume Designer **Kaye Voyce** in her BLO debut.

TICKETS

Season subscriptions start at \$96. Orders for new subscriptions will be taken starting May 3, 2010. Single tickets to the public go on sale September 12. Groups of ten or more receive a 20% discount on subscription packages and a 15% discount on single tickets. Group subscription packages go on sale May 3, 2010; group single tickets go on sale September 1, 2010. Call 617.542.6772 or visit blo.org.

MORE TO EXPLORE

BLO will enhance the 2010-2011 Season with various community programs including its Signature Series at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, which will once again examine this season’s operas in unexpected ways; free Opera Previews for ticket holders before each performance; Opening Night Festivities; and several free offerings including an Open House at the Shubert and Opera Nights at the Boston Public Library. Young professionals can socialize, network, and explore opera at discounted prices through BRAVO!

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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