



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 1, 2014



Media Contacts: Goodwin Group PR

Margrette Mondillo: (508) 404-1745,

margrette@goodwinpr.com

JoJo Gutfarb: (508)-404-1745,

jojo@goodwinpr.com

BOSTON LYRIC OPERA OPENS 38TH SEASON WITH NEW *LA TRAVIATA*

A Classic returns to Boston with new faces and artistic approach

Boston, MA—Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) launches its “Unforgettable Season of Leading Ladies” with a glorious new production of Verdi’s heartbreaking yet beloved classic, *La Traviata*, which has not been seen on the BLO stage for over a decade. Anya Matanovic makes her Company and role debut as Violetta Valery, the worldly courtesan with all the men of Paris at her feet. Her life takes a wrenching turn when she risks all for a chance at enduring love with fellow Company debut Michael Wade Lee’s Alfredo Germont. Alfredo loses and regains Violetta in one of the greatest reconciliation scenes in all of opera. *La Traviata* will open on Friday, October 10th at the Citi Performing Arts CenterSM Shubert Theatre and will run until October 19th.

New Approach

“Even dying, I love you still,” cries a young singer on stage, moving Julia Roberts to tears in the movie *Pretty Woman*. The singer is Violetta, a 19th century Parisian courtesan, known for her extraordinary beauty and grace, who has fired our imagination for more than 150 years. Plays, stories, films, and the opera keep this timeless story alive.

In *Pretty Woman*, Roberts’ character transforms from a prostitute to the beloved and highly-sought after belle of the ball. In BLO’s new production, director Chas Rader-Shieber reverses this transformation for Violetta. He moves the timing of the opera forward, closer to the turn of the 20th Century, when society developed a less accepting view on extramarital affairs.

“Our production illustrates the changing society of the 19th century courtesans – from the celebrated trophies of gentlemen to the kept women,” notes Esther Nelson, BLO’s General & Artistic Director. “As time progresses, Violetta’s world becomes smaller, in fact, the initial spacious and glamorous surroundings on stage literally close in on her. Her final hours are confined to a small lonely room. She is finally herself without worldly distractions.”

About the Artists

Soprano Anya Matanovic’s voice has been praised as, “sparkling,” “lyrical” and “crystalline.” She makes her role and Company debut opposite “spinto tenor” Michael Wade Lee, also a Company debut. Lee’s voice has been characterized as “velvety” and “tender,” yet “strong.”

Weston Hurt— Sharpless in BLO’s 2012 *Madama Butterfly*—is Alfredo’s father Giorgio, who will stop at nothing to protect his family’s honor. *The Hub Review* praised his performance in *Butterfly*, noting how his “confidently powerful vocal lines easily cut through even the richest of Puccini’s textures.”

Boston University graduate and New York City-based Set Designer Julia Noulín-Mérat recently oversaw the exciting #IamOpera party at American Repertory Theater’s Club Operon on September 8. The event, intended to show how young, fresh and relevant opera can be, celebrated Boston’s vibrant opera scene

by showcasing 13 opera companies to a diverse audience. The chance to take a fresh approach is exactly what attracted Noulin-Mérat to BLO's *La Traviata*.

All seven of BLO's Emerging Artists will appear, which is especially appropriate since Opening Night coincides with BLO's annual Opera Gala to support BLO's work with Emerging Artists.

LA TRAVIATA

Music by Giuseppe Verdi; Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

Sung in Italian with projected English translation

*A new BLO production

Conductor	ARTHUR FAGEN
Stage Director	CHAS RADER-SHIEBER
Set Designer	JULIA NOULIN-MERAT
Costume Designer	JACOB CLIMER
Lighting Designer	MIKE INWOOD
Violetta Valery	ANYA MATANOVIC*
Alfredo Germont	MICHAEL WADE LEE*
Giorgio Germont	WESTON HURT
Gastone de Letorieres, <i>enor</i>	JON JURGENS*#
Flora Bervoix	CHELSEA BASLER#
Baron Douphol	DAVID KRAVITZ
Doctor Grenville	DAVID CUSHING^
Marchese D'Obigny	DAVID WADDEN*#
Annina	RACHEL HAUGE*#

Boston Lyric Opera Orchestra

Boston Lyric Opera Chorus

•signifies Boston Lyric Opera debut

signifies BLO Emerging Artist

^ signifies Boston Lyric Opera Emerging Artist alumna/us

PERFORMANCE AND TICKET INFORMATION:

All performances will be at the Citi Performing Arts CenterSM Shubert Theatre, 265 Tremont St., Boston.

October 10, 2014 at 8:00 p.m. – The Opening Night Gala before the performance and post-performance After-Party will be held at the Citi Performing Arts CenterSM Wang Theatre across the street from the Shubert. Visit www.blo.org for details.

- For press tickets please contact Goodwin Group PR at 508-404-1745 or email jojo@goodwinpr.com

October 12, 2014 at 3:00 p.m.

October 15, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.

October 17, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.

October 19, 2014 at 3:00 p.m.

Single tickets start at \$30 and can be purchased at citicenter.org/latraviata/ or via the Citi Performing Arts CenterSM Box Office from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday at (866) 348-9738 or in-person at 270 Tremont Street, Boston, MA. Subscriptions are still available at blo.org or by calling BLO Audience Services at (617) 542-6772. Student rates, and special group discounts are available. Discounts for BLO's Young Professional group Prima are also available; details at www.blo.org.

ABOUT BOSTON LYRIC OPERA

Boston Lyric Opera is the largest opera company in all of New England. Now in its 38th season, BLO celebrates the art of the voice through its mission of building curiosity, enthusiasm and support for opera by creating musically and theatrically compelling productions, events, and educational resources for the Boston community and beyond. Since its founding in 1976, the company has staged world premieres, U.S. premieres, co-productions and co-commissions of note with organizations such as The Royal Opera, Covent Garden and Scottish Opera, and continues to be a destination for some of the leading artists, conductors, directors and designers from around the world.

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