

## BOSTON LYRIC OPERA'S FALL 2017 SEASON INCLUDES A NEW "TOSCA" AND THE WORLD PREMIERE OF "BURKE & HARE"

Rising Russian Soprano and 2016 Operalia Prizewinner Elena Stikhina makes her American debut in Puccini's *Tosca*, from Oct 13-22 at Emerson/Cutler Majestic Theater

*The Nefarious, Immoral but Highly Profitable Enterprise of Mr. Burke & Mr. Hare* by Julian Grant and Mark Campbell, a throat-grabbing, darkly comedic tale about 19<sup>th</sup>-century serial murderers, runs Nov 8-12 at The Cyclorama, Boston Center for the Arts

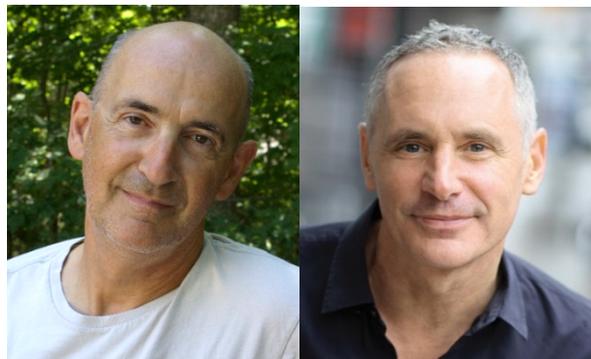
BOSTON – August 31, 2017 – The two new productions comprising Boston Lyric Opera's fall 2017 Season show not only the range in scope and tone for the company, but also the vibrancy with which classical and contemporary operas co-exist.



Elena Stikhina. Photo: Ilya Korotkov

BLO's new production of *Tosca* by composer **Giacomo Puccini**, and librettists Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, takes design inspiration from its 1900 premiere at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome and maintains the original story's timeline and locale – in the same city 100 years earlier, at the dawn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This production marks the American debut of Russian soprano **Elena Stikhina** (l.), in the lead role of a passionate singer caught in a love affair that causes her undoing. Stikhina is winner of the 2016 CulturArte and Audience Prizes at Placido Domingo's Operalia World Opera Competition. Powerful, accessible, and directed with a fresh perspective by **Crystal Manich** (*Werther, I Puritani*), this co-production with Opera Omaha runs Oct. 13-22 at the Emerson/Cutler Majestic Theater.

The World Premiere of *The Nefarious, Immoral but Highly Profitable Enterprise of Mr. Burke & Mr. Hare* – by composer **Julian Grant** and librettist **Mark Campbell** (r.), and commissioned by Music-Theatre Group with support from BLO – tells the story of William Burke and William Hare, two Irishmen who found lucrative work in murdering downtrodden citizens of Edinburgh, Scotland, and selling their bodies to a surgery school led by the morally ambiguous Dr. Robert Knox. Theatrically exciting, fast-paced and irreverent, this Opera Annex production is part of BLO's New Works program and is directed by **David Schweizer** (BLO's *The Love Potion, Emperor of Atlantis*). *Burke & Hare* runs Nov. 8-12 at The Cyclorama, Boston Center for the Arts.



(l.-r.) Julian Grant, composer, Photo: Peter Lighte; Mark Campbell, librettist, Photo

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### TOSCA – Oct. 13-22

Set against a backdrop of war, chaos and corruption, Puccini's quintessential opera is the dramatic and sweeping story of three strong-willed characters who are masters and victims of their own fates: Floria

Tosca, a young singer of grit and determination; the artist and revolutionary Mario Cavaradossi whom she loves; and the power-hungry police chief Baron Scarpia. Manich says the moving love story also presents *“a complicated world of religion and politics working together...and the impact it has on people’s lives. This is a story of love and transcendence of hardship, but it’s also a political opera...about corruption, the seizure of power, the unjust and constant changing of rules by a person who feels he has the right to do so unilaterally.”* A full synopsis of this *Tosca* production is available [here](#).

In addition to Elena Stikhina, who has amassed significant credits in her home country and throughout Europe, the *Tosca* cast includes American tenor **Jonathan Burton**, **Daniel Sutin** (BLO’s *Macbeth*), and **James Maddalena**, most recently was seen in BLO’s *La Bohème*. The design team includes **Julia Noulin-Mérat** as Set Designer, **Paul Hackenmueller** as Lighting Designer, and **Deborah Newhall** as Costume Designer. *Tosca* will be conducted by **David Stern** in his BLO debut. The son of acclaimed violinist Isaac Stern, David is founder of Opera Fuoco in Paris, chief conductor of Florida’s Palm Beach Opera, and music director/opera for the Crested Butte Music Festival in Colorado. Photos and bios of *Tosca* artists are available [here](#).

BLO’s *Tosca* will be performed at the ornate and history-rich Emerson/Cutler Majestic Theatre – a *beaux-arts* masterpiece whose opening dates near the time *Tosca* originally premiered.

*“Tosca is one of the most galvanizing, popular works in the opera canon and one of the best for those experiencing opera for the first time”* says **Esther Nelson**, BLO’s **Stanford Calderwood General and Artistic Director**. *“Tosca* has been a showcase for opera stars since its premiere, and Elena is a star indeed. We welcome her and David Stern for their BLO debuts.”

*Tosca* will be performed: Fri, Oct. 13 @ 7:30 pm; Sun, Oct 15 @ 3 pm; Wed, Oct 18 @ 7:30 pm; Fri, Oct 20 @ 7:30 pm; and Sun, Oct 22 @ 3 pm. [www.blo.org/tosca](http://www.blo.org/tosca)

### **THE NEFARIOUS, IMMORAL BUT HIGHLY PROFITABLE ENTERPRISE OF MR. BURKE & MR. HARE – World Premiere Nov. 8-12, including a special gala performance Nov. 10**

*“The opera event of the fall...a brutally funny satire that has a lot to say about our modern morality.”*  
– **Esther Nelson**

With its opening line, “The people of Edinburgh are not dying ... quickly enough,” composer Julian Grant and librettist Mark Campbell’s *The Nefarious, Immoral but Highly Profitable Enterprise of Mr. Burke & Mr. Hare* sets the stage for a highly theatrical, brutally funny chamber opera based on real events. Set in 1820s Scotland – when the city’s famed schools of anatomy faced a severe shortage of fresh cadavers for their lectures – the opera follows the luridly fascinating path of William Burke, William Hare and their accomplices as they discover a money-making opportunity by murdering disenfranchised citizens and selling their corpses to Dr. Robert Knox at his renowned medical academy.

*Burke & Hare*’s clever, surprising and fast-paced libretto puts the stories of the victims front and center, and raises modern questions about the ethical costs of scientific knowledge, advancement and discovery. A synopsis of this production of *Burke & Hare* is available [here](#).

The cast of *Burke & Hare* includes renowned tenor **William Burden** (who recently appeared in the national broadcast premiere of *Bel Canto* on PBS) as Robert Knox, **Jesse Blumberg** as William Burke, **Craig Colclough** as William Hare, and Scottish soprano **Marie McLaughlin** as Abigail Simpson. Additional cast members are **David Cushing**, **Heather Gallagher**, **David McFerrin**, **Michael Slattery** (who recently appeared in an OPERA America-sponsored New York showcase of the piece), **Emma Sorenson**, **Antonia Tamer** and **Michelle Trainor**. In addition to Schweizer, the artistic team includes

BLO Music Director **David Angus** who conducts a 12-member orchestra, set designer **Caleb Wertebaker**, costume designer **Nancy Leary**, and lighting designer **Robert Wierzel**.

*Burke & Hare* will be staged at the Cyclorama at the Boston Center for the Arts, an historic building whose neoclassical Victorian style reflects the story's 19<sup>th</sup> century time period, and whose circular interior recalls early operating theaters where students, scholars and others observed medical procedures.

**“Julian's music is distinctively his own: propulsive and powerful, with a good measure of wit,”** says Campbell. **“Mark's story is irreverent and cheeky, but also brutal and cutting,”** says Grant, **“it's told at an exhilarating pace, with great theatricality.”**

*Burke & Hare* is the inaugural full-length opera in BLO's expanded New Works program, the commission-focused arm of its Opera Annex initiative. Opera Annex aims for broader access to opera by opening the creative process to the public, with free workshops of new works, digital and social opportunities to follow development milestones, and more.

*Burke & Hare will be performed: Wed, Nov 8 @ 7:30 pm; Thu, Nov 9 @ 7:30 pm; Sun, Nov. 12 @ 12 noon; Sun Nov 12 @ 4 pm. (A benefit performance will be held November 10, 2017 as part of BLO's annual fundraising gala to support the New Works program.)* [www.blo.org/burke-hare/](http://www.blo.org/burke-hare/)

### **TICKETS**

Individual tickets for *Tosca* (\$25-\$255 +fees) and *Burke & Hare* (\$25-\$170 +fees) are on sale online [www.blo.org](http://www.blo.org), by phone at 617-542-6772, or via email at [boxoffice@blo.org](mailto:boxoffice@blo.org).

Subscriptions (priced from \$76-\$786, all included) and individual opera tickets are on sale for Boston Lyric Opera's full 2017/18 Season, which also includes new spring productions of Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* March 16-25, and Leonard Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti/Arias & Barcarolles* May 11-25. More information about the season is available at [www.blo.org](http://www.blo.org).

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### **MEDIA INFORMATION**

ARTIST INTERVIEWS, PHOTOS and BIOS are available.

- *Tosca* production and artist information available [here](#)
- *Burke & Hare* production and artist information available [here](#)

REVIEW TICKETS are available for fall Opening Night performances. *Limited seating available for other performances.*

- *Tosca* – Opening Night – Fri., October 13 @ 7:30 pm
- *Burke & Hare* – Opening Night – Wed., November 8 @ 7:30 pm

For interviews, tickets and more, contact John Michael Kennedy, [jmk@jmkpr.com](mailto:jmk@jmkpr.com) or 781-620-1761.