

BLO NEWS: NORMA AIRDATE ANNOUNCED; DIGITAL PLATFORM LAUNCHES WITH NEW PODCAST, DIGITAL LULLABIES, AND A “DIRECTORS’ CUT” PREMIERE

BOSTON – May 26, 2020 – Boston Lyric Opera announces several news items today an air date for the recording of its shuttered March 2020 production of Bellini’s NORMA, two new digital music series and more. For more details, or to interview BLO staff about these announcements, contact John Michael Kennedy at jmk@jmkpr.com or 781-620-1761.

BLO’S NORMA RECORDING TO BE BROADCAST JUNE 28

A recording of Boston Lyric Opera’s spring 2020 performance of Bellini’s NORMA, made during the final dress rehearsal on March 11 – one day before the production was shuttered, and its opening night was cancelled -- will air on 99.5 WCRB Classical Radio Boston’s “In Concert” series on June 28 at 7 pm EST. The recording was made under the direction of WCRB Manager **Anthony Rudel** and recorded by the station’s Grammy Award-winning Lead Sound Engineer **Antonio Oliart Ros**, who had just two-and-a-half hours to mic the production before the dress rehearsal began.



Elena Stikhina PHOTO: Ben Gebro

For this performance, which marks BLO’s debut on WCRB’s “In Concert” series, the BLO Orchestra and Chorus are conducted by Music Director **David Angus**. NORMA’s high-profile cast includes: internationally acclaimed soprano **Elena Stikhina** in her title-role debut; tenor **Jonathan Burton** as Pollione; bass-baritone **Alfred Walker** as Oroveso; mezzo-soprano **Sandra Piques Eddy** as Adalgisa; BLO Emerging Artist **Robyn Marie Lamp** as Clotilde; and Emerging Artist alumnus **Omar Najmi** as Flavio.

BLO is hosting materials at its NORMA [website](#) to enhance the listening experience, including behind-the-scenes videos, photos from the final dress rehearsal, the official program, education materials to help new listeners learn about the opera – even a NORMA cookbook featuring opera-inspired recipes from the cast, creative team and staff.

BLO LAUNCHES A NEW DIGITAL CONTENT PLATFORM, [INSERT:OPERA]

Boston Lyric Opera kicks off a new digital platform this week, titled [insert:opera]. The effort focuses on newly generated content and artistic projects. Its name nods to the short-hand for digital coding, as well as the idea that opera can, and should, be part of everyone’s life. [Insert:opera] premieres with two programs: a bi-weekly music



podcast, “AT ITS (s)CORE”; and the family-friendly music series, “Bedtime Lullabies Online.” Visit the online destination at www.BLO.org/insertopera/.

- **AT ITS (s)CORE PODCAST – PREMIERES MAY 28**

Boston Lyric Opera’s new audio podcast, “AT ITS (s)CORE,” is a music-focused bi-weekly series centered around a single piece of music that sparks conversations between artists about their shared experiences in the process of making opera, and living a life filled with music. “AT ITS (s)CORE” was conceived by **Melanie Bacaling**, a Stage Director and BLO Emerging Artist alumna, who serves as its founding producer.



Music Director **David Angus** participates in the first three episodes of the podcast. The first features Angus with violinist **Annie Rabbat**, who is Concertmaster for the BLO Orchestra and a member of the Grammy Award-winning Boston-based ensemble, “A Far Cry.” Angus and Rabbat discuss music from Giacomo Puccini’s *MADAMA BUTTERFLY*, which Rabbat used as an audition piece for the BLO Orchestra. Future episodes will include conductors, composer, singers and other artists.

“AT ITS (s)CORE” premieres May 28 on www.BLO.org/insertopera/ and is available on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcast, Stitcher and Spotify.

- **BEDTIME LULLABIES ONLINE– PREMIERES TONIGHT, MAY 26**

Boston Lyric Opera Director of Production **Jessica Johnson Brock** developed the idea for BLO’s new music series, *Bedtime Lullabies Online*, as a way to showcase onstage and behind-the-scenes opera artists performing the bedtime ritual of singing lullabies.



Available as short videos on BLO.org/insertopera, Brock says *Bedtime Lullabies* are perfect for accompanying children on their way to dreamland. But they will also feature soothing songs and music aimed at anyone who needs a gentle nudge into slumber, including parents, pets, and stressed-out adults. BLO Production Operations Manager **Ashley Shea**, herself a young mother juggling childcare and a full-time job, will manage production of the ongoing series.

Bedtime Lullabies Online debuts tonight, May 26, at 8 PM EST on www.blo.org/insertopera/

- **“NORMA DIRECTORS’ CUT” – PREMIERES JUNE 1**

In this three-part premiere video, members of Boston Lyric Opera’s NORMA artistic team: Music Director/Conductor **David Angus**; Stage Director **Stephanie Havey**; and Movement Director **Shura Baryshnikov** watch video excerpts of the production together and talk about the music, the rehearsal process, and the behind-the-scenes challenges of staging Bellini’s *bel canto* masterpiece. This is the only footage publicly available of the much-anticipated production that featured rising soprano Elena Stikhina’s title role debut but was shuttered before opening night, due to coronavirus concerns.

Angus discusses playing with the music tempo, not only to support the singers onstage, but also to avoid pauses in the audio recording being made that night. Havey marvels about the cast's acting chops and spills the beans on a sacrificial blood-letting scene that, um, was just *too bloody* in rehearsals. Baryshnikov reveals the challenges of repeatedly standing and kneeling in long Druid priestess gowns, and the influence of Maori Warrior poses on her choreography. Light-hearted graphics and annotations to the comments appear "pop-up style" throughout the video.



NORMA Directors' Cut premieres June 1 on www.blo.org/insertopera/

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