



BOSTON LYRIC OPERA'S STREET STAGE RETURNS FOR OUTDOOR PERFORMANCES, INCLUDING WORLD PREMIERE WITH CITY OF BOSTON YOUTH POET LAUREATE

Spring performances scheduled for Boston, Lincoln, Brockton and Harvard, Mass.

*New song cycle "my name is Alondra," commissioned by BLO,
debuts May 1 at The Rose Kennedy Greenway.*

BOSTON — April 21, 2021 — BLO Street Stage, Boston Lyric Opera's acclaimed mobile performance stage that debuted last fall and brought live music to socially distanced audiences around the region, returns for performances this spring that include a World Premiere commission by BLO featuring poems by City of Boston Youth Poet Laureate **Alondra Bobadilla** set to music by composer **Omar Najmi**.

BLO Street Stage aims to bring hope and joy to audiences around the region with a wide array of music from the opera, classical and traditional canons alongside new works, folk songs, popular music and more. One singer and one instrumentalist will perform at each concert this spring, to be in line with current city and state coronavirus prevention protocols.

Performers on the 26-foot-long, 8.5-foot-wide mobile stage are separated from audiences by a 25' radius. Panels on three sides of the vehicle open to provide a 270-degree view of the performers. The vehicle's street art design was created and painted by student artists from Artists For Humanity, guided by lauded muralist Rob "Problak" Gibbs and AFH Co-Founder Jason Talbot.

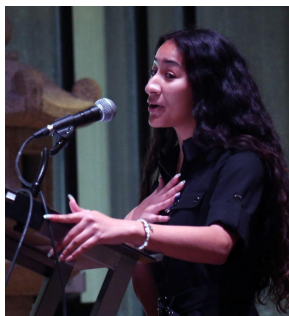
"Projects like 'Poetry in Music' show that viable, meaningful art has come out of the COVID-19 pandemic," says BLO Chief Operating Officer Bradley Vernatter. "A year ago, none of this work existed. Street Stage came from [BLO General and Artistic Director] Esther Nelson's and [Director Artistic Production] Jessica Brock's dream to break through in a time of artists being silenced by lockdowns...to bring music and healing to neighborhoods of Boston and its surrounding communities. With the help of the City of Boston and all our partners, BLO is creating new threads in the rich fabric of its work, and connecting with new audiences in ways we hadn't been able to before."

All BLO Street Stage events are free to the public, and are produced by Boston Lyric Opera in collaboration with partners including the City of Boston, The Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, The Trustees of Reservations, and the Fuller Craft Museum. Other non-public events this spring include community-based performances for audiences at Mass General Hospital and Villa Victoria. Commissioning support for “my name is Alondra” is provided by the Merrill Family Charitable Foundation.

“my name is Alondra” World Premiere — May 1 @ 11:30 am and 12:30 pm

BLO Street Stage hosts the World Premiere of the newly commissioned work “my name is Alondra” on Saturday, May 1 at Rowes Wharf Plaza on The Rose Kennedy Greenway. The first event in BLO’s new [“Poetry in Music”](#) initiative, “my name is Alondra” is a song cycle, with poems by City of Boston Youth Poet Laureate Alondra Bobadilla set to music by tenor and BLO Emerging Artist Composer Omar Najmi.

Last year, BLO General and Artistic Director Esther Nelson took note of Bobadilla’s January 2020 appointment as the city’s first youth poet laureate and discussed the possibility of collaborating with the native Bostonian. Bobadilla, who participated as a student in BLO’s in-school programs, submitted seven poems to Najmi for consideration, and the two had discussions on Zoom about which ones would work best with music. Four were chosen.



“I specifically chose poems about who I am as a person, as self exploration has been a consistent theme in many of my pieces in the past year,” says Alondra Bobadilla (l.). “When you read poetry it provokes specific feelings, thoughts and responses. Omar was able to capture through music the way I wanted the words to feel when someone reads these poems. It was a beautiful experience. The way you feel when you hear songs that relate to you, or move you, is what I felt listening to the music, but on a more intimate level.”

“Together, the four poems in the piece create an excellent narrative,” says Omar Najmi (r.). “They start out lighthearted and move into some darker material, personal struggles and grief. But the work ends on a note of comfort. Throughout all of Alondra’s poems is an incredible humanity. Her style is honest and direct. She gets right to the human points.”



“This is such an exciting collaboration, and a great way to celebrate youth through poetry, spoken word, and music,” said Kara Elliott-Ortega, Chief of Arts and Culture in the City of Boston. “BLO has done an incredible job of finding creative ways to provide impactful programming in a way that is safe, and I look forward to watching them continue that with these performances.”

BLO Emerging Artist **Zaray Rodriguez** and pianist **Brendon Shapiro**, an Emerging Artist alumnus, will perform “my name is Alondra” at 11:30 am and 12:30 pm at Rowes Wharf Plaza, in front of the Boston Harbor Hotel. Space is limited; information on reservations and COVID-19 protocols required onsite are available [here](#). Rain date is June 19.

Additional BLO Street Stage performances are listed below. Many of the performances will stream live and recordings will be archived on BLO's operabox.tv streaming service.

April 24 — Season Opening Performances -- Sold Out

The BLO Street Stage season opens with **two sold-out performances April 24** at the [deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum](#), a Trustees of Reservations site in Lincoln, Mass. These performances, with soprano Chelsea Basler and pianist Brett Hodgdon, were rescheduled from December 2020.

May 8 — BLO Street Stage at the Fruitlands Museum -- Sold Out (rain date May 22)

BLO brings music to another Trustees site May 8 at the Fruitlands Museum in Harvard, Mass. An opera singer and instrumentalist will perform two shows, at 11:30 am and 12:30 pm.

June 12 — Return to Rose Kennedy Greenway (rain date June 13)

BLO artists perform two shows of traditional opera arias, art songs, and more. An opera singer and instrumentalist will perform at 11:30 am and 12:30 pm. Performances are free, but registration is required at blo.org/streetstage/.

June 26 — Fuller Craft Museum in Brockton — June 26 (rain date June 27)

BLO Street Stage comes to Brockton for the first time, in partnership with the Fuller Craft Museum. Baritone Nicholas Lagesse and an accompanist will perform two sets of traditional arias, classical songs and more. Information on tickets will be available in May at blo.org/streetstage/.

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MEDIA INFORMATION: Limited media tickets are available for most Street Stage events. For details, contact John Michael Kennedy at jmk@jmkpr.com or 781-620-1761.