

# SVADBA

Coming Soon  
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Opera by Ana Sokolović

## **IN THE NEW FILM SVADBA, A BRIDAL PARTY PREPARES FOR A WEDDING GUIDED BY TRADITIONS ON A DREAMY, IDYLIC BEACH**

*A Boston Lyric Opera production, co-produced with Opera Philadelphia,  
"Svadba" debuts January 28, 2022 on BLO's operabox.tv and the Opera  
Philadelphia Channel.*

*Director Shura Baryshnikov and conductor Daniela Candillari create a timeless, magical  
world based on composer Ana Sokolović's music and libretto.*

BOSTON – January 7, 2022 -- The power of unadorned human voices meets the rustic, expansive beauty of a dreamy oceanside cottage, where six women celebrate the eve of a wedding -- with all its ritual, emotion, fun and reflection -- in [Svadba](#), a new cinematic opera experience co-produced by **Boston Lyric Opera** (BLO) and **Opera Philadelphia**.

Premiering January 28 on both BLO's [operabox.tv](#) and the Opera Philadelphia Channel ([operaphila.tv](#)), the film combines Serbian composer [Ana Sokolović](#)'s striking acapella music and text with a new dance-led visual interpretation by film director **Shura Baryshnikov** and screenwriter **Hannah Shepard**. Slovenia-born **Daniela Candillari** conducts the music.

### **A FRESH NARRATIVE ON AN INTIMATE STORY**

Ana Sokolović's original score includes text drawn from several sources, including Serbian poetry and Balkan folk music. Collectively, the libretto suggests story elements of a woman leaving her family, conversations about marriage and allusions to ceremonial preparations.

Live productions of "Svadba" have had artists sing and embody the six characters onstage; a film brings opportunities for added story dimensions. Six dancers and actors are on screen as the story's main characters, while six singers who create the film's music with voices and spare instrumentation also appear, suggesting ancestral spirits who watch over the action. Reflecting the alternately serene and hectic moments of wedding preparations, *Svadba* unfolds in non-linear ways.

Characters include bride-to-be Milica, maid of honor Ljubica, and family elder Lena who leads the events of the day. Bridesmaids Danica, Nada and Zora carry out the celebratory rituals with friendship and enthusiasm. The women make the most of the wedding eve, adorning the bride's dress, dyeing her hair, making food, picking flowers for the procession, and taking time for carefree fun on the beach where the wedding will be held. Sokolović describes the group as “distilling magic and fantasy from ordinary moments.”

Sokolović was intrigued to write about a wedding and its prenuptial rituals because they occur in nearly every country. “Weddings are an important turning point in many women's lives, with emotional and joyful moments,” she says. “I wanted to explore these themes, in a place where we are privy to private and ancient rituals between a bride and her girlfriends.”

## **ARTISTS AND PRODUCTION TEAM**

**Shura Baryshnikov** serves as the film's director. **Daniela Candillari** conducts the music. **Hannah Shepard** is screenwriter. **Ana Novačić** is Production Designer, **Katherine Castro** is Director of Photography and **Lena Borovci** is Costume Designer. Full creative team biographies are available [here](#).

Artists providing vocals and musical accompaniment include **Chabelle D. Williams** singing the role of Milica the bride-to-be, **Brianna J. Robinson** as Lena the elder, **Maggie Finnegan** as Danica, **Mack Wolz** as Zora, **Vera Savage** as Nada, and **Hannah Ludwig** as Ljubica. Full biographies of the music artists are available [here](#).

Artists embodying the characters include dancer **Victoria L. Awkward** (Milica), actor **Jackie Davis** (Lena), dancer **Jay Breen** (Danica/attendant), dancer **Sarah Pacheco** (Zora/attendant), dancer **Emily Jerant-Hendrickson** (Nada/attendant), and dancer **Sasha Peterson** (Ljubica, the maid of honor). **Olivia Moon** makes a special appearance as The Betrothed. Full biographies of the onscreen artists are available [here](#).

Acting Stanford Calderwood General & Artistic Director **Bradley Vernatter** says *Svadba* offers another distinctive take on the company's aim to bring new perspectives to opera storytelling, and expand its audiences. “Ana's music creates a transcendent sound world unlike anything else I've heard in contemporary opera,” Vernatter says. “We had the opportunity to interpret this sweet, emotional and universal story through the intersection of music, dance, design and film. ‘Svadba’ lets us escape into a whole other world and celebrate the beauty of togetherness.” Vernatter says the partnership with Opera Philadelphia expands BLO's reach and “gives us a chance to co-produce with a sister organization doing equally forward-thinking work for the screen.”

**David B. Devan**, General Director & President of Opera Philadelphia says his company had an artistic triumph with a live U.S. premiere of *Svadba* several seasons back, and was eager to revisit it in this new form. “When we presented a site-specific production of *Svadba* in 2013 it was the sold-out hit of that season,” Devan says. “Audiences marveled at its intimacy, and how the singers use their voices -- individually and in unison -- to create a unique, intoxicating work

of art. We are so happy BLO invited us on the journey to bring *Svadba* to our audiences once again in this stunning cinematic production.”

### **WHERE TO WATCH SVADBA**

*Svadba* debuts January 28, 2022 on BLO’s operabox.tv and the Opera Philadelphia Channel ([operaphilly.tv](http://operaphilly.tv)) streaming services. Both services are available on branded apps found on Apple, Google, Amazon and Roku platforms.

On-demand viewing is \$15. Subscribers to either service can access the film two days earlier on January 26.

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### **MEDIA INFORMATION**

- Media review access to *Svadba* will be available in January.
- Shura Baryshnikov, Daniela Candillari, Hannah Shepard, Ana Sokolović, and the music and dance artists are available to discuss their roles in *Svadba*.
- On-set photos of *Svadba*, including high-res images from the musical recording sessions and the Cape Cod film set are available [here](#).
- For interviews, screener access, and other information, contact John Michael Kennedy ([jmk@jmkpr.com](mailto:jmk@jmkpr.com) or 212-842-1752) or Jennifer Astin ([ja@jmkpr.com](mailto:ja@jmkpr.com) or 424-333-1718).