

# BOSTON LYRIC OPERA

## **BLO BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPOINTS** **BRADLEY VERNATTER** **AS GENERAL DIRECTOR AND CEO**

*Appointment follows Vernatter's term as Acting General and Artistic Director.*

*Artistic Director search will expand BLO leadership team to realize the new strategic plan, and bring a collaborative new creative voice to the company.*



BOSTON – Sept 22, 2022 – The Boston Lyric Opera Board of Directors, led by Michael J. Puzo, voted this week to appoint Bradley Vernatter as the Stanford Calderwood General Director and CEO, the company's highest leadership position. The appointment follows Vernatter's term as Acting General and Artistic Director. At Vernatter's suggestion to expand the company's leadership team, the Board moved to split the previous role into two positions and open a search for a new Artistic Director.

"There is clear enthusiasm on the board for Brad's leadership and his artistic vision during the past two seasons, which brought the company new artistic triumphs and growth while navigating unexpectedly troubled waters," Puzo says. He noted the Board recognizes Vernatter's accomplishments, including:

- Stewarding company operations, fundraising, and finances to continue producing throughout the pandemic and beyond;
- Producing BLO's return to live opera following the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, from *Cavalleria Rusticana* in fall 2021, its free performance of *Romeo & Juliet* on the Boston Common this summer and its upcoming production of *La bohème*;
- Expanding the Company's relationships with notable artists including Rhiannon Giddens, Michael Abels, Stephanie Blythe, Ellen Reid, Nico Muhly, Isabel Leonard, Talise Trevisne and others;
- Developing the Company's streaming platform, [operabox.tv](https://operabox.tv) and producing critically acclaimed films and series such as the animated film of Philip Glass' *The Fall of the House of Usher*, the cinematic adaptation of Ana Sokolovic's *Svadba*, and the genre-leading eight-part opera miniseries *desert in*;
- Launching [BLO Street Stage](#), the Company's mobile performance stage to bring opera to the region;
- Conducting an assessment of inequity and social justice at the company, and in the opera field; and

- Leading a planning process that resulted in [a five-year Strategic Plan](#) and revamped mission and vision statements for the Company.

“With an ambitious plan for BLO’s future in place,” Puzo says, “we look forward to expanding the leadership team and to welcoming a new Artistic Director to the company and the city.” The Artistic Director position will report to the General Director and CEO, and will be a partner with Vernatter and Music Director David Angus in planning artistic programs for the company.

Boston Lyric Opera completed its Strategic Planning process earlier this year, resulting in a comprehensive, forward-thinking plan to guide the artistic and administrative direction of the company over the next five years. The BLO Board of Directors adopted the plan, which revises the company’s mission and vision statements, and centers on: expanding the breadth of artistic programs; strengthening ties to regional and national communities; developing new leaders for the industry; and centering values of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.

“I am grateful for the leaders, artists and supporters who have contributed to BLO’s tremendous legacy and I am motivated by our new five-year plan,” says Vernatter. “We have the opportunity to put a stronger emphasis on being part of Boston’s civic and cultural fabric while producing the best of opera that inspires us and connects us.”

### **ABOUT BRADLEY VERNATTER**

Vernatter began working with Boston Lyric Opera in 2015 and was appointed Acting Stanford Calderwood General and Artistic Director in May 2021. He previously served as the company’s Chief Operating Officer. Earlier, Vernatter was Director of Operations for Opera Omaha and Associate Producer for its ONE Festival. He held artistic and management positions with Ireland’s Wexford Festival Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, the Castleton (Va.) Festival, and the Miller Theatre at Columbia University in New York City.

In 2020, Vernatter was recognized by *Boston Business Journal* as one of the “40 Under 40” rising young leaders. He is a member of the YW Boston LeadBoston 2022 cohort and serves on the Board of Advisors at Artists For Humanity, a non-profit that empowers teens through employment in the arts. In addition, Vernatter contributes to social entrepreneurship projects addressing access to basic services.

Vernatter holds a Master of Business Administration from the IE-Brown MBA program (Madrid/Providence, R.I.) as well as a Bachelor of Arts from Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio and a certificate in professional fundraising from Boston University. He is an alumnus of the OPERA America Leadership Intensive, through which he has participated in the Civic Action Group and as a reviewer for grants.

[A full biography of Bradley Vernatter is here.](#)

## **OPERA INDUSTRY LEADERS ON VERNATTER'S APPOINTMENT**

### ***Marc Scorca, President and CEO, Opera America:***

"The appointment of Brad Vernatter as Boston Lyric Opera's General Director is wonderful news. His success at guiding BLO through the pandemic, and experience at companies in the U.S. and Europe give him the broad perspective needed to shape the future of the organization. With the company's new strategic plan in hand, he will extend BLO's position as a national leader for the opera field."

### ***Nina Yoshida Nelsen, Mezzo-soprano, Co-founder of Asian Opera Alliance and a BLO Artistic Advisor:***

"Brad transformed Boston Lyric Opera as Acting General and Artistic Director. His commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is exemplary; Boston Lyric Opera's stages have been some of the most diverse in the nation during Brad's tenure. But for him, it's not only important only to show diversity on the stage, he also is passionate about reaching into communities, creating lasting and meaningful partnerships with neighbors, and bringing diverse voices into the decision making processes."

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## **MEDIA INFORMATION**

Vernatter, Puzo and opera industry contacts are available to talk about Venatter's appointment, the new leadership structure at BLO and expectations for the Artistic Director search. Contact John Michael Kennedy, [jmk@jmkpr.com](mailto:jmk@jmkpr.com) or 781-620-1761 or 212-842-1752.