

ALL I HAVE  
I GIVE FOR  
LOVE

2023/24  
SEASON

BOSTON LYRIC OPERA

## A SEASON FULL OF LOVE STORIES

***MADAMA BUTTERFLY** centers Japanese American experiences in 1940s America.*

***LA CENERENTOLA (CINDERELLA)** tells a human story with Rossini's magical music.*

***THE ANONYMOUS LOVER** revives an influential romantic comedy about a secret admirer.*

***EURYDICE** tells the mythical tale of Orpheus from the heroine's perspective.*

**BOSTON** – April 27, 2023 – Stories of love – unexpected, unrequited, unspoken, even underground – comprise Boston Lyric Opera's (BLO) 2023/24 Season, including three tales familiar to audiences (Giacomo Puccini's **MADAMA BUTTERFLY**, Gioachino Rossini's **LA CENERENTOLA (CINDERELLA)**, Matthew Aucoin's **EURYDICE**), and one written by an 18th century composer who's having a cultural renaissance (Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges's **THE ANONYMOUS LOVER**).

The four-production season finds the company back in three of Boston's great theaters, including Emerson's Colonial Theatre and Cutler Majestic Theatre this fall. Both spring shows will play at the newly refurbished Huntington Theatre.

"Love and the surprising circumstances that surround it were themes we wanted to explore in our upcoming season," says BLO's Stanford Calderwood General Director & CEO **Bradley Vernatter**. "We have built an extraordinarily bold line-up, starting with a poignant new production of Puccini's classic **MADAMA BUTTERFLY**. This telling of that story has emerged from the partnerships and learnings of '[The Butterfly Process](#)' and centers it on Asian American experiences during an often overlooked period of American history. It sets the pace for the season, for the evolution of our organization, and for the inclusive, intentional future for this Company and the artform."

More information about the BLO 2023/24 Season is below.

### **SEPTEMBER 14-24, 2023: MADAMA BUTTERFLY**

Boston Lyric Opera opens its 2023/24 Season with a four-performance, two-week run of Giacomo Puccini's **MADAMA BUTTERFLY** – a title the company has not presented since 2012. The production is directed by **Phil Chan** (r.) who makes his opera directing debut, with dramaturgy by BLO Artistic Advisor **Nina Yoshida Nelsen**, filmmaker/author **Arthur Dong** (*Forbidden City, USA* and *Hollywood Chinese*), and Indiana University



Associate Professors **Karen Inouye** (Director, Asian American Studies Program) and **Ashlyn Aiko Nelson**.

Chan's production brings the story of Butterfly and American Naval Officer B.F. Pinkerton into the world of 1940s California, where many Japanese Americans lived, and racial prejudice was heightened by World War II. Butterfly is a performer in a historically inspired world of Chinatown nightclubs of the time that employed Asian American artists and drew white American audiences by promising exoticism. Butterfly and Pinkerton fall in love before he must leave her – and a son he never knew – for military duty in the Pacific Rim. Swept up in a wave of xenophobia, Butterfly waits for her lover's return.

Chan says this new production tells a decisively American story. "All the characters in this BUTTERFLY are American citizens, and none of the story takes place in Japan – or anywhere outside California," he says. "As we look to keep the artform thriving, we need to make its stories relevant to the audiences and the people of our time, while making sure the timeless Puccini score is still heard."

This production of MADAMA BUTTERFLY is the first to be informed by "The Butterfly Process," BLO's extensive exploration of how opera companies can build intentional and authentic productions that invite everyone to participate, inspire new thinking, and strengthen both communities and audiences through the music and stories presented.



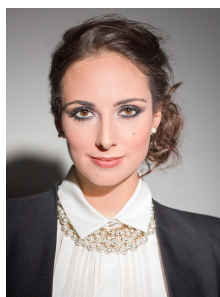
Casting for MADAMA BUTTERFLY includes **Karen Chia-Ling Ho** (r.) as Butterfly, **Dominick Chenes** as Pinkerton; **Alice Chung** as Suzuki, **Troy Cook** as Sharpless, **Rodell Rosell** as Goro and **Vera Savage** as Kate Pinkerton. Additional casting will be announced later.

The artistic team for MADAMA BUTTERFLY includes Set Designer **Yu Shibagaki**, Costume Designer **Sara Ryung Clement**, Lighting Designer **Jeannette Oi-Suk Yew** and Choreographer **Michael Sakamoto**. MADAMA BUTTERFLY will be conducted by BLO Music Director **David Angus** and presented at the Emerson Colonial Theater Sep. 14-24, 2023.

### **NOVEMBER 8-12, 2023: LA CENERENTOLA (CINDERELLA)**

One year after writing his opera buffa *The Barber of Seville*, Gioachino Rossini composed a take on this fairy tale love story that dispenses with the fairy dust and focuses on the wisdom of the human heart. No pumpkin carriages or mice-becoming-horses in this version; instead, says conductor and BLO Music Director **David Angus**, the magic comes in the form of Rossini's heartfelt, uplifting score and the simple libretto by Jacopo Ferretti.

Boston-area Stage Director **Dawn M. Simmons** – nominated for several 2023 Elliot Norton Awards for her direction of "K-I-S-S-I-N-G" at The Huntington and several other projects with Front Porch Arts Collective, where she is Co-Producing Artistic Director – will helm the production in her BLO debut and her first foray into opera.



Casting for LA CENERENTOLA includes: **Cecelia Hall** (l., photo by Dario Acosta) as Angelina, the title character; **Levy Sekgapane** as Don Ramiro, the Prince of Salerno; **Levi Hernandez** as Dandini; and **Brandon Cedel** (seen in BLO's 2019 *The Rape of Lucretia*) as Don Magnifico, the Baron of Montefiascone and Angelina's stepfather. Additional casting will be announced later. CINDERELLA plays three performances, November 8, 10 and 12 at the Emerson Cutler Majestic Theater.

## FEBRUARY 16-18, 2024: THE ANONYMOUS LOVER

**Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges** is having a moment. The new biographical film *Chevalier* tells the story of this musically and romantically prolific composer whose opera THE ANONYMOUS LOVER debuted in 1780. Based on an 18th century French play, the opera and its source material has set the stage for secret-epistolary love stories in plays, Broadway musicals, Hollywood films, and other mediums.

Recent attention on Bologne's life story, and the enduring appeal of his opera's charming romance has brought THE ANONYMOUS LOVER back into repertoires across the country. The story revolves around the wealthy young widow Léontine who is being pushed to remarry, and rejects offers from unsuitable suitors until she becomes intrigued by letters from a secret admirer.

"Joseph Bologne was a competent, serious composer and a big star in his time," says BLO Music Director David Angus. "While somewhat better known for his concertos, Bologne wrote five or six operas...only one of which survives. Bologne certainly knew of W.A. Mozart, and is often compared with him. But he actually worked with Joseph Haydn, negotiating the commission of Haydn's *Paris Symphonies*, a collection of works that Bologne also edited and conducted in their premiere. THE ANONYMOUS LOVER is an accessible, very charming story with beautiful arias."

With a libretto by **François-Georges Fouques Deshayes, Desfontaines**, THE ANONYMOUS LOVER is a co-production with Opera Philadelphia – sung in French with English dialogue and surtitles. It plays three performances, February 16, 17 and 18 at The Huntington Theatre.

Casting for THE ANONYMOUS LOVER includes **Nardus Williams** (l., photo by Bertie Watson) as Léontine and BLO Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artist alumnus **Omar Najmi** as Valcor. **Dennis Whitehead Darling** is Stage Director; **David Angus** conducts. Additional casting to be announced later.



## MARCH 1-10, 2024: EURYDICE

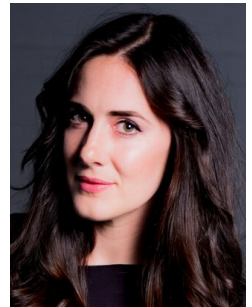
Composer **Matthew Aucoin** and librettist **Sarah Ruhl**'s adaptation of the Greek myth of Eurydice and Orpheus is based on Ruhl's 2003 play of the same name that refocuses the original story's narrative on Eurydice's perspective. Aucoin, who will also conduct the BLO Orchestra, grew up in Boston and, at age 33, has become one of the country's most-watched young opera composers.



After attending the show's Metropolitan Opera performance in 2021 (it premiered at LA Opera in 2020), BLO General Director & CEO Bradley Vernatter approached Aucoin (l.) to discuss a new chamber edition (in collaboration with Opera Grand Rapids) that would create a more immediate and intimate experience.

"Rethinking EURYDICE in this way is part of BLO's tradition of creating intimate productions of pieces like *Bluebeard's Castle* or *Lizzie Borden* that were originally at larger scales," Vernatter says. "Matthew and Sarah have created a beautiful opera rooted in the classical tradition, with a story that reflects contemporary sensibilities."

Casting for EURYDICE includes **Sydney Mancasola** (r.) in the title role, **David Portillo** as Hades, and **Mark S. Doss** as Father. Additional casting to be announced. The production is sung in English with English surtitles and will run for five performances over two weekends at The Huntington Theatre March 1-10, 2024.



The commission of EURYDICE is supported in part by a gift from Pat and Bill O'Connor.

## ALL SEASON LONG: COMMUNITY EVENTS

Boston Lyric Opera plans a series of educational and enlightening public events connected to its programming throughout the season. From school- and library-based artist visits, to events in collaboration with the Boston Public Library and other partners, BLO is committed to increasing insight and access to opera across the city.

## ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING

In its ongoing move to become a four-season opera producer, creating music events and public activities between its mainstage performances, Boston Lyric Opera is planning an additional concert for Spring 2024, the details of which will be announced at a later date.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS/TICKETS HERE

Four- and three-part opera subscriptions (known as "Quartet" and "Trio" packages) are on sale now at BLO.org or by contacting Audience Services at [boxoffice@blo.org](mailto:boxoffice@blo.org) or 617-542-6772. Individual tickets go on sale in July.

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## MEDIA CONTACT

For high-res artist photos, interviews about the season or other inquiries, contact John Michael Kennedy, [jmk@jmkpr.com](mailto:jmk@jmkpr.com) / 781-620-1761 (o) / 212-842-1752 (m).

*The phrase "All I have, I give for love" comes from Sarah Ruhl's libretto for EURYDICE, composed by Matthew Aucoin and a new co-commission appearing in BLO's 2023-24 Season.*