

# VERDI & GHISLANZONI'S AIDA

## BOSTON LYRIC OPERA'S SPECIAL PERFORMANCE OF AIDA CENTERS VERDI'S MUSIC WITH A ROYAL CAST

*Michelle Johnson, Alice Chung, Diego Torre, Brian Major and Morris Robinson lead the cast in a concert version of Verdi's classic.*

## PERFORMANCE PRECEDES GALA FUNDRAISER HONORING PHILANTHROPIC, ARTISTIC, COMMUNITY AND HUMANITIES LEADERS

*Ray & Maria Stata, Morris Robinson, Leverett Wing, Jeremy Eichler to be honored. Previous and new winners of the Shrestinian Award for rising singers to be recognized.*

Boston, MA – September 30, 2024 – Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) presents a special one-performance, concert-style production of **Giuseppe Verdi's AIDA** on Sunday, November 10, 2024, at 3 pm at the Emerson Colonial Theatre. The performance is followed by The Opera Gala, BLO's signature annual fundraiser, at 6 pm at the Hilton Boston Park Plaza Hotel.



Conducted by BLO Music Director David Angus, this production of AIDA gathers a world-class cast that brings the music front and center, and features a collaboration with Boston's choral community. The cast is led by **Michelle Johnson** (l., BLO's "Cavalleria Rusticana") who sings the title role of the Ethiopian princess; **Alice Chung** ("Madama Butterfly") as Amneris, **Diego Torre** ("Tosca") as Radamès, **Brian Major** ("Champion") as Amonasro, and **Morris Robinson** who – in the role of Ramfis – returns to the company and the opera where he launched his international career 25 years ago to the day.

**The Opera Gala** returns for the first time in four years. The event honors for the first time four high-profile individuals for their contributions to the arts, the opera community, and the city. The inaugural honorees are: philanthropists, business and community leaders **Ray & Maria Stata** as *Leadership Honorees*; AIDA cast member and Boston University alum **Morris Robinson** (r.) as *Artistic Honoree*; business/social entrepreneur **Leverett Wing** as *Community Honoree*; and author, educator and former Boston Globe chief classical music critic and journalist **Jeremy Eichler** as *Humanities Honoree*.



In addition to the honorees, The Opera Gala will recognize **Arielle Rogers-Wilkey** (r.), the 2023/24 Season recipient of BLO's **Stephen Shrestinian Award for Excellence**, and announce the next recipient at the event. Named in memory of a beloved BLO Chorus member who died in 1996 at the age of 29, The Shrestinian Award supports the advancement of exceptional early career artists in the BLO Chorus. Funds may be used for career advancement activities such as coaching, classes, graduate school tuition or travel expenses.



"This is an extraordinary day of entertainment, achievement and celebration," says **BLO General Director and CEO Bradley Vernatter**. "First we welcome longtime friends and opera newcomers to immerse themselves in Verdi's score, performed by a stellar lineup of international and Boston-based artists. Then we celebrate our community, and the people who comprise and support it. Together, AIDA and The Opera Gala highlight our dedication to this big, ambitious art form, and our commitment to education and community programs." Vernatter says Gala proceeds support BLO education and community initiatives, including the free-to-the-public community opera NOAH'S FLOOD that will be produced in May 2025 with hundreds of youth performers from the community.

#### **ABOUT AIDA**

Verdi's thrilling music and **Antonio Ghislanzoni's** libretto tell a tale of loyalty in war and in love; it remains a revered opera from the traditional canon. In ancient Egypt, commander Radamès is forced to choose between love for the Ethiopian princess Aida who has been captured and enslaved, and loyalty to his sovereign Egyptian king. Hidden identities, unrequited romances and espionage tangle the battling royal families, leaving no one's fate unchanged. Full of heart-rending arias, dramatic duets and rousing choral works, AIDA will be presented in a concert format.

The AIDA cast is joined by the Boston Lyric Opera Orchestra and Chorus in performing Verdi's score, with support from Boston's choral community including [Back Bay Chorale](#).

#### **ABOUT THE OPERA GALA**

Co-chaired by **Alicia Cooney & Stephen Quigley** and **Rumena & Alexander Senchak**, with Young Patrons Chair **Arjun Gupta**, The Opera Gala returns for the first time since February 2020. The event includes a cocktail hour, an immersive dining experience, musical performances, and the inaugural presentation of four community honors.

"Supporting the critical role of engaging our community and especially our youth in opera – the greatest form of the performing arts – while also honoring a diverse group of luminaries who help make it happen, turns our Gala into one of the go-to Boston events of the year," says Co-Chair Alicia Cooney.

#### **TICKETS AND INFORMATION**

Separate and combination tickets for the AIDA performance on November 10 at 3 pm, and The Opera Gala at 6 pm are available at [blo.org/aida](http://blo.org/aida) and [blo.org/gala2024](http://blo.org/gala2024).

- AIDA tickets start at \$48. Ticket support at [boxoffice@blo.org](mailto:boxoffice@blo.org) or 617.542.6772
- Individual Opera Gala tickets are \$1,500; tickets for patrons 21-45 are \$400. Sponsorships are available. Purchase information at [donorservices@blo.org](mailto:donorservices@blo.org) or 617-702.-8975

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## **ABOUT BLO**

In its 48th Season, Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) remains dedicated to creating compelling operatic experiences throughout Greater Boston that welcome new audiences, break new ground, and enrich community life. Since its founding in 1976, Boston Lyric Opera has produced world and U.S. premieres, Pulitzer Prize-winning operas, and notable commissions and coproductions, from live stage shows to films streamed worldwide. Details at [BLO.org](http://BLO.org).

## **MEDIA**

For details on AIDA/The Opera Gala and access to creative team or onstage artists, contact John Michael Kennedy, [jmk@jmkpr.com](mailto:jmk@jmkpr.com), 781-620-1761 (o), or 212-842-1752 (cell/text).