

BOSTON ONLY LYRIC OPERA

MAY 20 & 22

Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre

TERENCE BLANCHARD'S

CHAMPION

AN OPERA IN JAZZ

LIBRETTO BY MICHAEL CRISTOFER

BRADLEY VERNATTER

*Acting Stanford Calderwood
General & Artistic Director*

DAVID ANGUS

Music Director

JOHN CONKLIN,
VIMBAYI KAZIBONI, &
NINA YOSHIDA NELSEN

Artistic Advisors

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new home studio in Fort Point



(L-R) Brendon Shapiro, Zaray Rodriguez, and Nicholas LaGessee perform during the filming of *B.*, a performance series now streaming on operabox.tv.

OUR MISSION AND VALUES

The mission of Boston Lyric Opera is to build curiosity, enthusiasm, and support for opera by creating musically and theatrically compelling productions, events, and educational resources for the Boston community and beyond.

Boston Lyric Opera commits to exhibit the following values:

- We acknowledge and appreciate the inherent human rights of all individuals, without discrimination.
- We believe that our work must be based on mutual respect.
- We aim to examine our actions so that we may act without bias based on the differences we encounter during our work.
- We aspire to listen, learn, and seek diversity among the voices that join us in our work.

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WELCOME!



What a moment to be gathered here, experiencing opera live and in person—together. It's poignant to me that we're gathered *here*, at the Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre, for this moment—the place where our last indoor performance, *Norma*, was scheduled to welcome audiences in March 2020.

We never made it to the opening of that show, due to then-new COVID shutdowns. The gorgeous world created onstage for that production stayed in place, suspended on stage for nearly five months—a partially descended moon hanging over a forest of unlit trees and empty orchestra stands. Many moons later, we're glad to be back, taking the stage once again.

Champion: An Opera in Jazz is a modern masterwork—vivacious, audacious, and moving—just like the life of its protagonist, boxer Emile Griffith. Composer Terence Blanchard and librettist Michael Cristofer have rendered a rich and dignified story for the multilayered Griffith, with a beautiful melodic score, breathtaking arias, and a seamless melding of music styles that gives it a distinctive character and one that is uniquely American. Like Terence's most recent opera, *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, which had its Metropolitan Opera debut last year, *Champion* is a new American classic.

The story of *Champion* is one of belonging. Even as he made a successful public persona, he struggled to feel that he belonged in his professional or personal realms. The details of this opera may be personal to Emile Griffith, but it is the story of many. Regardless of origin, we yearn to share a sense of belonging.

It also underscores Boston Lyric Opera's commitment to landmark artistic works from talented, diverse composers throughout history and today. Masterpieces like *Champion* and our 2022/23 Season offerings are the heart of who we are and who we want to be.

I invite you to join us for a summer of opera—on the Common and on BLO's Street Stage—and for all of next season. Thank you for being here at this performance with us, and for your ongoing support. It means so very much.

Bradley Vernatter | Acting Stanford Calderwood General & Artistic Director

<p>Roméo et Juliette</p> <p>FREE: AUG 11 & 13</p>	<p>LA BOHÈME</p> <p>SEP 23 - OCT 2</p>	<p>Bluebeard's Castle</p> <p>Four Songs</p> <p>MAR 22 - 26</p>	<p>OMAR</p> <p>MAY 4 - 7</p>
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LIBRETTO BY Jules Barbier
& Michel Carré

A Musical Retelling of
Shakespeare's
Star-Crossed Lovers

AUG 11 & 13
FREE on the Boston Common



A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

It's wonderful to be back with you at the Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre. Returning today spurred memories of being on site in March of 2020 for the dress rehearsal of our production of *Norma*, scheduled to open later that week. The air was charged with anticipation. The stage was different than most final rehearsals—"decorated" with high-caliber microphones and recording equipment from our friends at GBH/CRB Classical 99.5, designed to capture what we knew might be the only full performance of the production. Earlier that day, the decision had been made not to open the show to the public, as COVID had begun to spread through the city and large crowds were simply too risky to host. Still, it was an incredibly memorable night.

Memorable too was the night of March 24, 1962, when Emile Griffith and Benny "Kid" Paret fought for the world welterweight championship at Madison Square Garden. Boxing was more popular back then, and I remember the fight—a marquee matchup that had captured the attention of boxing fans and an ABC television audience. While Paret knocked Griffith down in Round 6, it was Griffith's furious pounding of a defenseless Paret in Round 12 that reverberates today. The spectacle that followed the dramatic removal of Paret from the ring on a stretcher, to his death 10 days later, was riveting. One can scarcely imagine how it must have felt for Paret's family or for Griffith; nor should one underestimate the impact it rightly had on a brutal sport.

The story of that fight and of Griffith's life—grandiose, emotional, full of dramatic turns—was certainly ripe for an opera treatment. It's a modern *opera verismo*, the 19th century movement that favored stories of real or recognizable people over fantastical beings and situations. *Cavalleria Rusticana* from last fall is another shining example of the form.

On behalf of BLO's board, thank you for being here. We are grateful, too, for the many collaborative partners with whom BLO has worked so well over the past two-plus years. Thank you for your loyalty to BLO and your ongoing support of opera, a cherished and dynamic art form with a bright future in Boston.

Enjoy the show.

Michael J. Puzo | Chair, Board of Directors

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Join us for our last discussion,
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CHAMPION

AN OPERA IN JAZZ

Music by Terence Blanchard

Libretto by Michael Cristofer

Sung in English with English surtitles.

MUSIC DIRECTOR

DAVID ANGUS

2021/22 Season Sponsor

Linda Cabot Black

PERFORMANCES

FRI, MAY 20 | 7:30PM

SUN, MAY 22 | 3:00PM

Performance time is approximately 2 hours
and 20 minutes including one intermission.

NOTE: *Champion: An Opera in Jazz*
contains adult themes, including explicit
language, non-consensual sexual situations,
and physical violence.

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ROBERTO VICARIO/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

In his apartment on Long Island in the present day, Emile Griffith struggles to dress himself, confused. Luis, his adopted son, partner, and caretaker, helps him get ready for an important meeting, as Emile's memories intensify...

In the 1950s on the island of St. Thomas, Emile is a young man who dreams of reuniting with his mother, Emelda, and becoming a hat maker, singer, and baseball player. He moves to New York City and finds her, and though she doesn't recognize him, she is overjoyed to reunite with one of the children she left behind. She brings him to meet Howie Albert, a hat manufacturer, hoping to find Emile work. Howie sizes up Emile and immediately recognizes his potential as a boxer. He offers to train him as a welterweight, and Emile quickly develops his natural talent and physique, as Emelda urges him to give up his other dreams. But Emile is lonely and struggles with his

identity. He goes to a queer bar in Times Square and meets Kathy, the owner, who welcomes him into an exciting but scary new community. Emile opens up to Kathy about his childhood and the cruelty he experienced from a fundamentalist relative.

In 1962, Emile is set to fight Benny "Kid" Paret in a high-profile match. When they face off at weigh-in, Paret taunts Emile, calling him "maricón," a Spanish slur for homosexuals. Emile is furious, and they nearly come to blows right there. Howie pulls him away, but when Emile begins to explain why the insult hit so close to home, Howie refuses to have the conversation, telling him that the boxing world is not a place where he can be open about his sexuality. Alone, Emile wrestles with his sense of manhood and self. The fight begins and quickly becomes heated. Paret continues to mock him, and as the fight escalates, Emile delivers 17 blows in seven seconds. Paret collapses, falls into a coma, and later dies.

Back in the present day, lost in his memories, Emile thinks that he sees Paret and speaks with him. Luis reorients him and reminds him that today, they will go to meet Paret's son.

As the 1960s continue, Emile amasses more wins, more fame, and more notoriety, but internally, he is haunted by memories of Paret and grapples with his identity. He meets and marries a woman named Sadie, against the advice of Howie and Emelda. In the 1970s, however, his luck changes. He is on a losing streak and starting to show signs of "boxer's brain" due to chronic traumatic brain injury. Emile rejects the support of his family and Howie, returning to a queer space he frequents, outside of which he is brutally beaten by a group of bigots.

In the present, overcome with memories of the attack, Emile becomes agitated and confused; Luis calms him, reminding him all of that is in the past. They go to meet Kid Paret's son, Benny Paret, Jr., and Luis tells Benny about Emile's condition. Emile expresses regret and asks Benny for his forgiveness, as voices from Emile's past intensify and crescendo in his mind.

Luis takes Emile back home. Alone once more, Emile's memories recede and hush.

CREATIVE TEAM

**Kwamé Ryan | Conductor**

Kwamé Ryan held the position of General Music Director of Freiburg Opera between 1999 and 2003, and that of Musical and Artistic Director of the National Orchestra of Bordeaux Aquitaine between 2007 and 2013. As a guest conductor in Germany, he has conducted the Radio Orchestras of Baden-Baden and Freiburg, Stuttgart, and Bavaria, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Staatsoper Saarbrücken and Staatsoper Stuttgart. While in France, he worked at Opera de la Bastille, Opera de Lyon, Opera de Bordeaux and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. His work in the USA has taken him to the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, Dallas, Detroit, Indianapolis, Atlanta, Houston, New Jersey and the Grant Park Festival, Chicago, and in the U.K., to English National Opera, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Royal Scottish Symphony and the Philharmonia. He has, for many years, been a regular guest of the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra and recently returned to La Monnaie—National Opera of Belgium to conduct the World Premiere of *The Time of Our Singing* by Kris DeFoort. Upcoming engagements include debuts at Dutch National Opera, Theatre St. Gallen, the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra and the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra with a return to the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

**Timothy Douglas | Stage Director**

Timothy Douglas is a theatre director, actor, and educator who has staged productions of *Assassins* (Berkshire Theatre Group), *Nina Simone: Four Women* (Arena Stage), *The Color Purple* (Portland Center Stage), and served as assistant stage director on *Rodelinda* (Virginia Opera). Representative directing assignments include the world premieres of Jason Reynolds' *Long Way Down* (Kennedy Center), August Wilson's *Radio Golf* (Yale Rep), Rajiv Joseph's *The Lake Effect* (Silk Road Rising/Jeff Award Best New Work), Adrienne Kennedy's *Etta & Ella On The Upper West Side* (McCarter & Roundhouse Theaters), Cheryl L. West's *Something Happened In Our Town* (Children's Theatre Company), *Etiquette Of Vigilance* (Steppenwolf), *Dontrell Who Kissed The Sea* (Theatre Alliance/6 Helen Hayes Award nominations), *The Last Orbit Of Billy Mars* (Woolly Mammoth), the U.S. premieres of Tristan Bernay's *Frankenstein* (Classic Stage Company) and

Natasha Gordon's *Nine Night* (Roundhouse Theatre), the NYC *Bronte: A Portrait Of Charlotte* (Off-Broadway), as well as projects for American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Denver Center Theatre Company, Guthrie Theater, Shakespeare Theatre Company, and many others. International credits include *Disgraced* (The Great Theatre of China), *Rosmersholm* (National Theatre Norway), *Mules* (Downstage New Zealand), *The Three Sisters* (Toi Whakaari New Zealand), and *Eve's Song* (Sundance Theatre Institute Morocco). Timothy currently serves as Distinguished Artist in Residence at Emerson College and is a recipient of the Lloyd Richards/National Black Theatre Festival Director Award. He has previously served as the associate artistic director for Actors Theatre of Louisville and director-in-residence at Center Theatre Group. MFA, Yale School of Drama. timothydouglas.org

**Darius Barnes | Movement Director**

Darius Barnes is a director, choreographer and performing artist. He is the Associate Choreographer of *Kimberly Akimbo* at the Atlantic Theater. Darius produced the inaugural *Antonyo Awards* on YouTube, in collaboration with Broadway Black and the Black Theatre Society. He began choreographing by participating in the New York Choreographic Institute. His works include *Mandala* (New York City Ballet) and *to be in contact* (Carolina Ballet). His theater work includes *MJ the Musical* (Assistant Choreographer), *Five Guys Named Moe* (Associate Director/Choreographer, Playhouse on Park) and *Broadway Bounty Hunter* (Associate Choreographer, Barrington Stage). Darius appeared in the Metropolitan Opera and Chicago Lyric Opera debut of *Fire Shut Up In My Bones* and in six Broadway shows including *Mean Girls* and *Memphis*. On TV, Darius is featured in *UPROOTED: A Journey of Jazz Dance* (HBOMax), *Halston* (Netflix) and in Estelle's music video, *Conqueror*. Darius studied at the School of American Ballet (SAB) and began his career joining the New York City Ballet. He has danced with the Suzanne Farrell Ballet and Dance Theatre of Harlem. Darius is on the teaching staff and adjudication panel for MOVE|NYC| and is a member of SAB's Alumni Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion.

**Rocío Mendez |*****Fight & Intimacy Director***

Making their Boston Lyric Opera debut, Rocío Mendez is an award-winning actor, fight and intimacy director and a proud

New Yorker committed to building confidence in brown and black girls through storytelling. Credits include *Fire Shut Up In My Bones*, *Eurydice*, *Rigoletto*, *Rodelinda*, *Lucia* (The Met Opera) POTUS (Broadway), *Merry Wives*, *Romeo y Julieta* (Public Theater), *On Sugarland* (NYTW), *Black No More* (The New Group), *Vietgone*, *The Royale* (Geva Theater Center), *The Wolves* (ATL), *Secret Life of Bees* (Atlantic Theater Company). Rocío is a team member of UNKLE DAVE'S FIGHT-HOUSE—a collective of fight/intimacy/movement directors serving theater, film and educational institutions. rociomendez.com

**Marcus Doshi | *Lighting Designer***

Marcus Doshi is an international, award-winning theatre maker who designs lighting and sets for theater, opera, and dance and collaborates with artists and

architects on a wide array of non-performance-based work. His work has been seen extensively in New York. Broadway credits include *Linda Vista* (2019) and *Pass Over* (2021). Work Off-Broadway includes a longstanding collaboration with Theatre for a New Audience. In Chicago, he has created for Steppenwolf, The Goodman, Lyric Opera, and at most major regional theatres and opera companies in the USA. Internationally his work has been seen in 18 countries across five continents; notably *La Traviata* (Lyric Opera of Chicago, Canadian Opera Company, Minnesota Opera, Houston Grand Opera); *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (Aldeburgh Music, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, La Monnaie in Brussels, Dutch National Opera, Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia); *Giulio Cesare* (Houston Grand Opera); *Don Giovanni* (Santa Fe Opera); and *Elektra* (Seattle Opera); as well Sydney Festival, National Arts Centre Mumbai, among many others. He is Associate Chair of Department of Theatre at Northwestern University, where he teaches design. marcusdoshi.com

**Tyler Micoleau |*****Co-Lighting Designer***

Tyler Micoleau has designed the lighting for hundreds of productions including plays, opera, dance, movement-theatre,

multi-media performance, and puppetry. His opera designs include *I due timidi* / *Suor Angelica*, *Cendrillon*, *La clemenza di Tito*, *Dangerous Liaisons*, *Macbeth*, and *Mahagonny* for Manhattan School of Music, Die

Fledermaus for Palm Beach Opera, *Carmen* for Opera Maine, *The Lighthouse* for Dallas Opera, *The Cunning Little Vixen* for the Curtis Music Institute and Philadelphia Opera, and the American premiere of Wolfgang Rihm's *Proserpina* for the Spoleto Festival USA. Tyler is the recipient of a 2018 TONY award for the musical *The Band's Visit*, two American Theatre Wing Hewes Awards, two Off-Broadway Lucille Lortel awards, two Village Voice OBIE awards (including a 2010 OBIE for Sustained Excellence), and a Drama Desk nomination. He has held visiting artist positions at Yale University, Dartmouth College and for six years served as adjunct faculty at Sarah Lawrence College Department of Dance.

**Sara Brown | *Set Designer***

Sara Brown is a set designer for theater, opera, and dance. Selected designs include *The Day at Jacob's Pillow*; *Hagoromo* at the Brooklyn Academy of

Music; *Fellow Travelers* and *La Rondine* at the Minnesota Opera; *World of Wires* at The Kitchen in NYC and Festival d'Automne in Paris; *Prince of Providence* at Trinity Repertory Company in Providence, RI; *Der Freischütz* with Heartbeat Opera in NYC; *The Mother of Us All* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Upcoming projects include *Common Ground Revisited* at the Huntington Theater and *Letters That You Will Not Get* produced by American Opera Projects as part of the On Women festival with Irondale Ensemble Project. She is an Assistant Professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Music and Theater Arts. You can view her work at sarabdesign.com.

**Trevor Bowen | *Costume Designer***

Trevor Bowen is a costume designer based in the Twin Cities and is a 2021-22 McKnight Theater Artist Fellow at the Playwrights' Center, and a member of

USA 829. In Minnesota, his designs have been featured at the Pillsbury Theater, Minnesota Opera, Guthrie Theatre, Children's Theater Company, Walker Art Center, and Mixed Blood Theater. Other projects include *Fellow Travelers* (Boston Lyric Opera); *The Knock* (Glimmerglass Festival); *The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963*, *Black Beauty*, *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* (Seattle Children's Theatre); *BLKS*, *True West* (Steppenwolf); *Sweat* (Asolo Rep); *Ragtime* (5th Ave); *Ride the Cyclone* (McCarter). Bowen's upcoming engagements include *Brothers Size* at American Players Theatre and *Holy Ground/Taking Up Serpents* at Glimmerglass Festival. Bowen graduated from West Virginia University with a Master of Fine Arts in Costume Design.



J. Jared Janas |

Wig-Makeup Designer

Opera: *Written in Stone* at Washington National Opera, *Porgy and Bess* and *The Flying Dutchman* at The Atlanta Opera,

two seasons as Wigmaster at Glimmerglass Festival, and four seasons as Wigmaster at Bard Summerscape. Broadway: *How I Learned to Drive*, *American Buffalo*, *Jagged Little Pill*, *Frankie and Johnny in the Claire de Lune*, *Gettin' the Band Back Together*, *Bandstand*, *Indecent*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *The Visit*, *The Real Thing*, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*, *Motown*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess*, *All About Me*, *Next to Normal*. Recent Off-Broadway & Regional: *The Bluest Eye* (Huntington), *Ah, Wilderness!* (Hartford Stage), *Clue* (Paper Mill Playhouse), *Seven Deadly Sins* (Tectonic Theater Project), *Sing Street* (NYTW), *Scotland, PA* (Roundabout), *Wives* (Playwrights Horizons), *Toni Stone* (Roundabout), *BLKS* (MCC), *Nantucket Sleigh Ride* (Lincoln Center), *Alice by Heart* (MCC), *Miss You Like Hell*, *The Low Road*, and *Father Comes Home from the Wars...* (Public Theater), *Jerry Springer the Opera* (New Group), *Yours Unfaithfully* (Mint Theatre, Drama Desk nomination). Recent Film/TV: *And Just Like That*, *The Gilded Age*, *Madam Secretary*, *The Good Fight*, *Six by Sondheim*, *Gotham*, and *Mozart in the Jungle*.



Markel Reed | Young Emile Griffith

A passionate conveyor of the operatic repertoire, baritone Markel Reed has performed in concert, recital and opera performances throughout the US,

Canada and Europe in both standard and contemporary works. Reed's 2021-22 season opened with the premiere of Damien Sneed and Karen Chilton's *The Tongue & The Lash* at Opera Theatre of St. Louis, where he portrayed James Baldwin. At the Metropolitan Opera, Reed performed with the ensemble in productions of Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, also covering the roles of Foreman/Adult James and Lawyer Frazier in *Porgy and Bess*. No stranger to these productions, Reed sang with the Metropolitan Opera's chorus in their Grammy Award-winning *Porgy and Bess* in 2019. That same year, he created the role of Chester in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* in its premiere at Opera Theatre of St. Louis.



Tichina Vaughn | Emelda Griffith

Grammy Award-Winning American mezzo-soprano Tichina Vaughn has established an important presence among the world's leading opera houses,

concert halls and theaters. As an outstanding singing-actress versatile in opera, operetta, musical theater, and jazz, Vaughn continues to gather both popular and critical acclaim. Ms. Vaughn began her operatic career as a member of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Program. For the 2021-2022 season, Ms. Vaughn returned to the Metropolitan Opera as The Hostess of the Inn in *Boris Godunov*, Maria in *Porgy & Bess* and Serving Woman 1 in *Elektra*. In the summer of 2022 she joins the Cincinnati Opera, returning to the role of Amneris in *Aida*. Career highlights include performances at the Metropolitan Opera, Dutch National Opera, San Francisco Opera, English National Opera, Teatro alla Scala Milan, Staatsoper Hannover and Semperoper Dresden, with roles ranging from Mother Jeanne in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Maria in *Porgy and Bess*, Begonia in *Der Junge Lord*, Klytemnestra in *Elektra*, The Queen in *Schwanda the Bagpiper*, and Azucena in *Il Trovatore*. Ms. Vaughn has received many awards and honors during her distinguished career including the Metropolitan Opera National Council Award, the Richard Tucker Foundation Study Grant Award, the Opera Index Vocal Competition Award, Licia Albanese Puccini Foundation Award, and a Birgit Nilsson Foundation Award.

CAST



Brian Major | Emile Griffith

During the 2021-22 season, baritone Brian Major makes his debut as Scarpia in *Tosca* with Opera Columbus, sings the role of Taylor in the world premiere of *Undying Love* at Hearing in Color and will join Sarasota Opera as Ezio in *Attila*. He also returned to Opera Carolina as Amonasro in *Aida* and performed as Schaunard in *La bohème* with the Florentine Opera and Columbus Symphony. During the 2020-2021 season, he was engaged to make his Chautauqua Orchestra debut singing in Moravec/Campbell's *Sanctuary Road* and performing selections from *Porgy & Bess*, his Opera on the James debut as Scarpia in *Tosca*, and a debut with Maryland Lyric Opera as Ford in *Falstaff* (COVID-19).

In the spring of 2021, Major returned to Opera Grand Rapids as Gary in Douglas Pew's *Penny* and performed a series of concerts with Lyric Fest, Opera Delaware and the Princeton Festival. Major holds degrees from Morehouse College and Boston University along with a performance certificate from the prestigious Boston University Opera Institute.



**Chabrelle D. Williams | Cousin
Blanche/Sadie Donastrog Griffith**

Soprano Chabrelle Williams is a dynamic presence on the stage and an accomplished educator. She is a native of

Philadelphia and has a wide musical range including opera, gospel and musical theater. In addition to opera, Chabrelle also enjoys the more intimate experience of performing oratorio and art song. Some highlights in her performing career include: the soprano solo in Verdi's *Requiem* with Citymusic Cleveland, the original Cousin Blanche/Sadie Donastrog Griffith in *Champion* by Terence Blanchard at Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* by Mozart, the title role in Puccini's *Suor Angelica* and Elle in *La voix humaine*. Most recently, Chabrelle performed the role of Milica in BLO's *Svadba* and La Contessa in Opera in the Heights' Lucia and Figaro Highlights concert. This past winter, Chabrelle appeared as Esther in the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon and Lynn Nottage's new opera *Intimate Apparel*.



Jesus Garcia | Luis Rodrigo Griffith

Acclaimed tenor Jesus Garcia specializes in romantic roles of the French and Italian repertoires. His best known performances include a debut in the title role of Charles

Gounod's *Faust* at the Savonlinna Opera Festival, *La bohème* with Tampere Talo in Finland, and as Count Almaviva in Rosetta Cucchi's Boston Lyric Opera production of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Garcia has performed in W.A. Mozart's *Requiem* throughout Italy with Filharmonia Arturo Toscanini, conducted by Rinaldo Alessandrini. His recordings include the world premiere of Jorge Martin's *Before Night Falls*, the Original Broadway Cast recording of Baz Luhrmann's *La bohème*, and Laurent Pelly's production of *La Vie Parisienne*. As part of the principal ensemble of Luhrmann's *La bohème*, in which he played Rodolfo, Garcia received a 2003 Tony Honor for Excellence in the Theater. He has been seen on NBC's *Today Show*, A&E's *Breakfast with the Arts*, and the Tony Awards broadcast, has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, *New York* and *Opera News*.



**Terrence Chin-Loy | Benny "Kid" Paret/
Benny Paret, Jr.**

American tenor Terrence Chin-Loy opened the 2021-2022 season in his solo debut at the Metropolitan Opera in Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up In My Bones*. Thereafter, he returned to Arizona Opera for his second season as a Marion Roose Pullin Resident Artist where he sang Henrik Egerman in *A Little Night Music* and Ferrando in

Così fan tutte. In the 2020-2021 season, Terrence sang a series of concerts with Arizona Opera as a member of the Studio, and joined the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival in a piece by Daniel Bernard Roumain about the shooting of Philando Castile. He also appeared in William Grant Still's *Highway 1* as a Gardine Young Artist at Opera Theatre St. Louis. Earlier appearances include Mingo (Cover) in *Porgy and Bess* at the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Festival of Song as a part of the Vocal Rising Stars series at Caramoor. Terrence is a graduate of Indiana University, where he received a Performer Diploma. He also holds degrees from Mannes College and Yale University where his studies concentrated on music theory and musicology. He is a 2018 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions National Semifinalist.



Wayne Tigges | Howie Albert

Bass-baritone Wayne Tigges is making his Boston Lyric Opera debut as Howie Laber and joined Tulsa Opera for Jochanaan in *Salome*, for the 2021/22

season. His recent engagements include: Mr. Flint in *Billy Budd* (San Francisco Opera); Owen Hart in *Dead Man Walking* (Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, Atlanta Opera); Judge Turpin in *Sweeney Todd* (San Francisco Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera); Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (LA Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Opera Philadelphia, Lyric Opera of Chicago); Frank in *Die Fledermaus* (Palm Beach Opera); John Proctor in *The Crucible* (Opera Santa Barbara); title role of *Der fliegende Holländer* (Atlanta Opera, Virginia Opera, Austin Opera and Florentine Opera); Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Tonio in *I Pagliacci* (New Orleans Opera); the title role in *Gianni Schicchi* and Tonio in *I Pagliacci* (Utah Opera); Sgt. Aaron Marcum in the world premiere of *Huang Ruo* and David Henry Hwang's *An American Soldier* and Mr. McGuire in Tobias Picker's *Emmeline* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis); Méphistophélès in *Faust* (Macau); Assur in *Semiramide* (Washington National Opera); Villains in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* (L.A. Opera, Hawaii Opera Theater); the title role in *Falstaff* (Des Moines Metro Opera); Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress* (Teatro Municipal de Santiago); Roy Cohn in *Angels in America* (New York City Opera); Joe St. George in the world premiere of Picker's *Dolores Claiborne* (San Francisco Opera); Achilla in *Giulio Cesare* (Metropolitan Opera); the Villains in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Hercules in Gluck's *Alceste*, Douglas in *La donna del lago*, and Nourabad in *Les pêcheur de perles* (Santa Fe Opera); and Donner in *Das Rheingold* and both Zuniga

and Escamillo in *Carmen* (Los Angeles Opera). Tigges received a graduate degree and Artist Diploma from the University of Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music and his Bachelor of Music from Iowa State University.



Stephanie Blythe | Kathy Hagen

A renowned opera singer, recitalist, and cabaret artist, mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe is one of the most highly respected and critically acclaimed artists of her generation. Her repertoire ranges from Handel to Wagner, French art song to contemporary and classic American song. She has performed on many of the world's greatest stages, such as Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, Paris National Opera, and the San Francisco, Chicago Lyric, and Seattle opera houses. She starred in the Metropolitan Opera's live HD broadcasts of *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Il Trittico*, *Rodelinda*, *Cendrillon*, and the complete Ring Cycle and also appeared in PBS's *Live From Lincoln Center* broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic's performance of *Carousel* and her acclaimed show, *We'll Meet Again: The Songs of Kate Smith*. Her recordings include her solo album, *as long as there are songs* (Innova), and works by Mahler, Brahms, Wagner, Handel and Bach (Virgin Classics). Blythe was named Musical America's Vocalist of the Year in 2009, received an *Opera News* Award in 2007 and won the prestigious Richard Tucker Award in 1999. She is also the Artistic Director of the Fall Island Vocal Arts Seminar at the Crane School of Music, and in 2019 was appointed the Artistic Director of the Bard College Conservatory of Music Graduate Vocal Arts Program. Blythe occasionally moonlights as dramatic tenor, Blythely Oratono.



Jonathan Harris | Little Emile Griffith

Jonathan Harris is making his BLO and professional debut. A singer in Boston Children's Chorus since 2021, Harris is a member of the Advance Intermediate group. His other theateric experience was in a production of *Aesop's Fables Music* in 2019 while he was a student at the Hudson PEP Elementary School in Longview, Texas. Currently, Harris is a student at Joseph Plouffe Academy in Brockton and is a part of the TAG Program there where he learns skills to aid in music theater performance. An honors student, Harris enjoys playing baseball and is excited to make his debut.



Neal Ferreira | Ring Announcer

Tenor Neil Ferreira returns to Boston Lyric Opera (*In the Penal Colony*) and recently appeared with the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra at Symphony Hall

as Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, and with Emmanuel Music as Macheath in Benjamin Britten's version of *The Beggar's Opera*. In the spring of 2022, the tenor returned to the Boston Symphony Orchestra in *Wozzeck* at Carnegie Hall under the baton of Maestro Andris Nelsons. A much sought after interpreter of new music, Ferreira made his European debut in the spring of 2021 as Laertes in the world premiere of Joseph Summer's *Hamlet* with State Opera Rousse, Bulgaria. Ferreira has also been featured on the premiere recordings of Charles Wuorinen's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (BMOP/sound), Joseph Summer's *The Tempest* (Albany), Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Odyssey Opera), and James MacMillan's *Clemency* (BIS Records). Ferreira has also appeared with Florida Grand Opera, the Glimmerglass Festival, Opera Colorado, Virginia Opera, Anchorage Opera, Syracuse Opera, American Repertory Theatre, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and Guerilla Opera. Ferreira is currently an Assistant Professor of Voice at Berklee College of Music and also serves on the voice faculty of his alma mater, Providence College. He holds a Master of Music degree from the New England Conservatory of Music, and he is a proud student of internationally renowned tenor, Frank Lopardo.



Nicholas LaGesse | A Man in the Bar/A Young Man

Baritone Nicholas LaGesse is a Jane and Steven Akin Emerging Artist at Boston Lyric Opera. Previous career highlights include Guglielmo in *Così Fan Tutte* with the North Shore Music Festival, covering Morales in *Carmen* with Martina Arroyo's Prelude to Performance program, as well as Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the title role in *Don Giovanni*, and Danilo in *The Merry Widow*, all with Pacific Opera Project. A frequent performer of contemporary opera, he works regularly with recent MacArthur Fellowship recipient Yuval Sharon and his critically acclaimed, experimental opera company, The Industry. He helped create the role of Jameson in The Industry's multi-location production of *Hopscotch*, as well as creating the role of Federzoni in composer Andy Akiho's operatic adaption of Bertolt Brecht's play *Galileo*. Nicholas has been honored as a finalist in the Palm Springs Opera Guild Competition, the winner of the Chicago Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Competition, and was a Bella Voce award recipient in the Bel Canto Foundation Competition. nicholaslagesse.com

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Carmen Alfaro *Assistant Stage Manager*
Paul Smith *Assistant Stage Manager*
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Brett Hodgdon *Chorus Master*

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David Rivera Bozón
Fred C. VanNess, Jr.

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Michael Galvin
Devon Russo
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Yonah Zur

VIOLIN II

Sarah Atwood *Principal*

Stacey Alden

Robert Curtis

Megumi Stohs-Lewis

Roksna Sudol

Lena Wong

VIOLA

Kenneth Stalberg *Principal*

David Feltner

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Abigail Kubert-Cross

CELLO

Aron Zolkowicz

Acting Principal

Melanie Dyball

Jan Pfeiffer-Rios

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Barry Boettger

FLUTE

Linda Toote *Principal*

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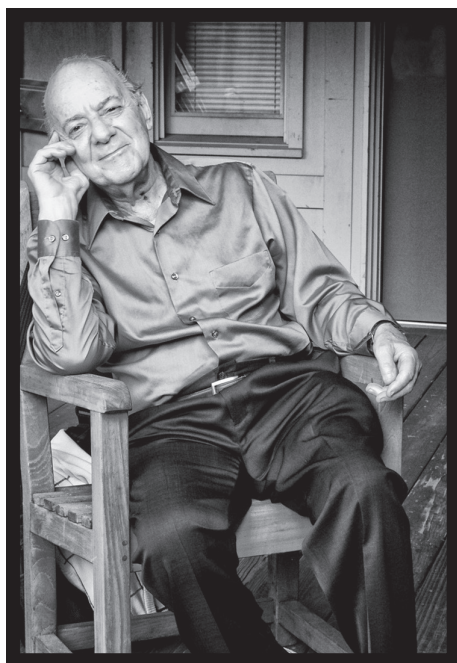
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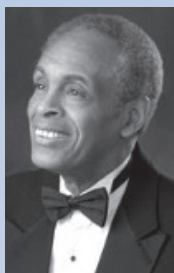
AFTER NEARLY 40 YEARS AS PART OF THE BLO ORCHESTRA, MAYNARD GOLDMAN RETIRED THIS SEASON

Maynard has been a friend and colleague for 12 years, ever since I first worked with the BLO orchestra in 2010. Maynard's biggest contribution has always been his enthusiasm, for the music and for the singers, for the whole art form of opera. He always demonstrated that love and knowledge in his playing, and, more recently, in his close attention to everything that happened in rehearsals and performances. His wide knowledge of players and repertoire has been very useful and he has just been part of the BLO family for so long that it will be very strange not to see him in the background at every rehearsal. I know his history goes back decades before my time in Boston, even including playing for Stravinsky!

Thank you for everything, Maynard!

– David Angus | *BLO Music Director*

In Memoriam



ERNEST TRIPLETT

Boston Lyric Opera mourns the recent death of critically acclaimed bass-baritone, Ernest Triplett. Ernest was founder and mainstay of Associate Artist Opera Company, one of the two companies who became Boston Lyric Opera, becoming the first Black director of a union affiliated opera company. He was a founding member of BLO, giving us the Company name we bear, and served as our first Artistic Director.

His legacy gave us the foundation for the artistry and innovation that thrive on stage today.

BLO remembers with fondness friends whom we lost in the past three years.

Jason Allen	Edward C. Johnson III	Bill Reals
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Stephanie Cohen	Dr. Lucy D. Manuelian	Dennis Shapiro
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Robert Glauber	Cosmo Papa	Ernest Triplett
Roger Golde	Herb Pollack	Erin Wall
Emily C. Hood	Carol Porcelli	



COSMO PAPA

This year, BLO lost a very special friend, volunteer, supporter, and life-long lover of opera: Cosmo Papa. Cosmo's hands-on support of opera goes back to the days of Sarah Caldwell and continued up through February of this year. On any given day at BLO's office, you might run into Cosmo spreading his devilish cheer, tremendous knowledge, and contributing menial labor. No volunteer task was too big or too small for this engineer, formerly in radar, radiation and most recently radio astronomy. Cosmo could be counted on to attend all manner of BLO lecture evenings, panel discussions, student classroom operas, house parties, galas, mini-concerts and, of course, every opera—twice-over.

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WHEN OPERA MEETS JAZZ: A BRIEF HISTORY

BY LUCY CAPLAN

One day, a *New York Times* article made the striking announcement that there was a “Jazz Opera in View for the Metropolitan.” The company expressed interest in producing an opera of the “modern American type.” Branching out beyond the European canonical repertory, the article explained, was a necessary innovation which would “bear important fruit in the near future.” If these sentiments—a desire to expand the repertory, a commitment to foregrounding new work—sound familiar, then it may come as a surprise to learn that this article was published nearly a century ago: on November 18, 1924. What’s more, its focus on a “jazz opera” suggests that the idea of bringing jazz into the opera house is hardly new. Rather, the concept is nearly as old as jazz itself.

Champion enters into this century-long tradition in which opera and jazz intermingle. Yet it’s important to note that Terence Blanchard describes his work not as “jazz opera,” but rather as an “opera in jazz.” The distinction is significant: it suggests that for Blanchard, jazz is not just a modifier of opera but an essential context for the entire work. The composer has elaborated, “I’m trying to take American folklore that I know, that I’ve experienced, which is jazz, and bring that into the operatic world, but not totally use the entire piece to make a statement about jazz.”

Complicating matters further is the fact that both “opera” and “jazz” resist easy definition. Each describes an expansive, stylistically diverse art form whose parameters have changed dramatically over time. Their respective definitions are also bound up with questions of geographic and racial identity. Jazz—sometimes called “America’s classical music”—builds upon diverse local traditions within Black musical life; opera’s roots are in Europe, and the art form’s major institutions have historically excluded people of color. Even though both genres have long attracted artists and audiences of myriad backgrounds, these historical associations are vital to understanding what happens when the two intertwine.

Among the innumerable works which combine jazz and opera in some capacity, a few early examples help illuminate these complex dynamics. The 1924

call for a “jazz opera” at the Met, in fact, offers a prime illustration. The *Times* reported that the company had three potential composers in mind for this new piece: Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, and George Gershwin, all white men renowned for their work in non-operatic genres. The narrow makeup of this list was perhaps unsurprising, given a long history within opera in which supposedly “exotic” or racialized music entered the opera house via the compositional perspective of white male composers.

Yet the call for a “jazz opera” resonated with others as well. For instance, it sparked the imagination of Harry Lawrence Freeman, one of the most remarkable figures in U.S. opera history. Freeman, who was born to a family of free Black landholders in Cleveland and moved to New York around 1910, had been composing opera since the 1890s. A Wagner aficionado with an immensely ambitious vision for representing Black life on the operatic stage, Freeman had rarely before been interested in merging jazz with opera. Yet he saw an opportunity, and quickly began work on a piece he called *American Romance: A Jazz Opera*. Unlike most of Freeman’s earlier works, which featured Black characters and were set in various locales from ancient Egypt to Mexico, *American Romance* told the story of a white American family in 1920s New York. The opera even featured a Wagner-inspired leitmotif called “jazz,” a punchy figure of sixteenth notes scattered atop an eighth-note bass. The opera never reached the stage, but it offers a tantalizing example of how African American composers were thinking about jazz and opera at this juncture.

Freeman’s work also implicitly spoke back to a growing fad for “jazz opera” among white American and European composers. Gershwin’s *Blue Monday*, written in 1922, was a short work, subtitled “Opera á la Afro-American,” that was originally intended to be part of a Broadway revue. Loosely inspired by *Pagliacci*, it begins with the proclamation that the audience is about to “Love! Hate! Passion! Jealousy!”. It proceeds to offer an over-the-top dramatic narrative, bolstered by a score—orchestrated by the Black composer Will

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A SINCERE THANK YOU to the members of **Boston Lyric Opera's Health Task Force for Opera Artists** for their tireless support over the past two years. With their expertise and guidance, BLO has been able to establish COVID-19 protocols that have allowed our staff and artists to work and stage productions and events, like *Champion*, *Cavalleria rusticana* and BLO's Street Stage.

We extend our utmost gratitude for our frontline workers for their effort in providing a safe work environment for BLO's administrative staff and artists.

Boston Lyric Opera's Health Task Force for Opera Artists

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Mass General Brigham Chair &
BLO Consulting Physician

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ABOUT BOSTON LYRIC OPERA

Both locally and beyond, Boston Lyric Opera leads the way in celebrating the art of the voice through innovative programming and community engagement initiatives that redefine the opera-going experience. Now in its 45th Season, BLO is the largest and longest-lived opera company in New England. Since its founding in 1976, the company has staged world premieres, U.S. premieres, co-productions and co-commissions of note with organizations such as The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Scottish Opera and San Francisco Opera and continues to be a destination for some of the leading artists, conductors, directors and designers from around the world.

BLO's programming remains faithful to tradition while blazing new ground, building audiences, and creating new ways to enhance the opera-going experience. Artists in our Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artists initiative work to hone their craft and prepare themselves for other world-leading stages. BLO's wide-reaching education initiatives introduce opera to new audiences across generations.

Through your support and attendance, BLO employs nearly 350 artists and creative professionals annually—vocalists, artisans, stagehands, costumers, and scenic designers—many of whom are members of our own community. The Company is proud to play a significant and meaningful role in Boston's vibrant arts community.

Boston Lyric Opera is a member of OPERA America, the national service organization for opera in the U.S. and Canada.

THE NATIONAL **OPERA** CENTER
AMERICA

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Champion is funded in part by grants from the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, The Amphion Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Community engagement programming for *Champion* is supported in part by the Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation.

The 2021/22 season is supported by the Reopen Creative Boston Fund, administered by the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, and Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

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join us

Boston Lyric Opera invites the
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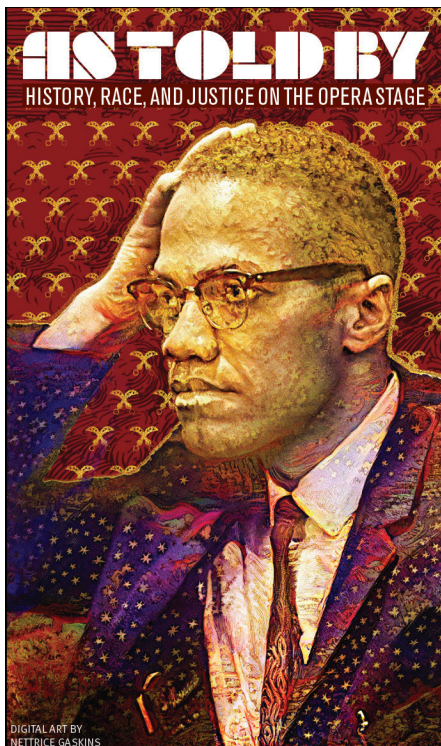
Featuring a performance by Vanessa Becerra,
star of BLO's upcoming *Romeo & Juliet*

Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres

JUNE 14, 2022 | 6PM - 8PM

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The Orfeo and Goldovsky Societies of Boston Lyric Opera recognize extraordinary annual and legacy support for the Company. To learn more, contact Sarah Blume at sblume@blo.org or 617.702.8974.



X The Life and Times of Malcolm X

FRIDAY JUNE 17, 2022
THE STRAND THEATRE, 8PM

The New England premiere of Anthony Davis's groundbreaking opera. Starring Davóne Tines and featuring Joshua Conyers, Ronnita Miller, Whitney Morrison, and Victor Robertson. The first opera in AS TOLD BY, a five-year series of seminal operas by Black composers.

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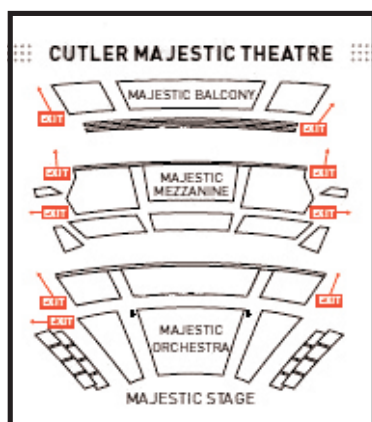
PERFORMANCE AND VENUE INFORMATION

All performances begin on time. At the request of our patrons, Boston Lyric Opera observes the national opera standard of a no late seating policy. Additionally, if you must leave during the performance, reentry may be prohibited. While we understand that traffic conditions, public transportation, weather, and other factors can have unexpected effects on your arrival, we wish to minimize disruptions for our seated patrons and for our artists on stage.

As a courtesy to the artists and for the comfort of those around you, please turn off mobile phones, watch alarms, and other devices with audible signals prior to the start of the performance. The use of cameras or recording devices in the theater is strictly prohibited.

For BLO productions, subscriptions & tickets, visit [BLO.org](https://blo.org) or call BLO Audience Services at 617.542.6772, M - F | 10 - 5.

EMERSON CUTLER MAJESTIC THEATER



ACCESSIBILITY

- There is no elevator access to the Mezzanine and Balcony.
- Restrooms are located in the lower lobby and accessible by elevator.
- There are 30+ stairs to reach the Mezzanine and 60+ stairs to reach the Balcony.
- Listening devices are available at the box office windows in the lobby.

VENUE INFORMATION

Emerson Cutler Majestic Theater
219 Tremont Street, Boston
617.824.8400 | artsemerson.org

FIRE EXIT PLANS | For your own safety, please take a moment to view the exits.

COVID-19 POLICY | All patrons attending any production at the Cutler Majestic must be in compliance with the venue's Shared Code of Conduct (available at emersontheatres.org).

All patrons must remain masked during the performance.

BOSTONLYRIC**OPERA**

2022/23 SEASON

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A Musical Retelling of Shakespeare's
Star-Crossed Lovers

Romeo Juliet

BY Charles Gounod
LIBRETTO BY Jules Barbier
& Michel Carré

AUG 11 & 13
FREE on the Boston Common

A Timeless Story
of Loss & Love

LA BOHÈME

BY Giacomo Puccini
LIBRETTO BY Luigi Illica &
Giuseppe Giacosa

SEP 23 - OCT 2
Emerson Colonial Theatre

A Psychological Pairing

Bluebeard's Castle

BY Béla Bartók
LIBRETTO BY Béla Balázs

Four Songs

BY Alma Mahler

MAR 22 - 26
The Terminal @
Flynn Cruiseport Boston

The New England Premiere
of a Compelling True Story

OMAR

BY Rhiannon Giddens &
Michael Abels
LIBRETTO BY
Rhiannon Giddens

MAY 4 - 7
Emerson Cutler
Majestic Theatre



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MEET THE ARTIST – COVER



Matthew Arnold | *Ring Announcer*

A two-time Finalist in the Houston Grand Opera Eleanor McCollum Competition, Tenor Matthew Arnold has spent the last ten years working in the world of professional opera. Recent awards include Third Place in the Charlotte Opera Guild Competition, the Encouragement Award at the 2015-2017 Heafner-Williams Competition, The Encouragement Award in 2015 from Chautauqua Opera and in April 2014, he won the Verdi Award from the Orpheus National Vocal Competition. Mr. Arnold has sung throughout the United States and Europe with many opera companies including the Castleton Festival as Prince Yamadori in *Madama Butterfly* under the baton of the late Maestro Lorin Maazel, AJ Fletcher Opera Institute, Piedmont Opera, Opera Roanoke, North Carolina Opera, and Chautauqua Opera. Recent role performances include Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Miami Music Festival and the Fletcher Opera Institute, Don José in *Carmen* and Siegmund and Florestan in scenes from *Die Walküre* and *Fidelio*, respectively. Mr. Arnold holds the BM in Voice from the University of Delaware, the Master of Music degree in Voice from the UNC Greensboro and the Artist Diploma from The University of North Carolina School of the Arts where he studied with Marilyn Taylor. Mr. Arnold currently resides on the North Shore where he is Director of Music and Organist for Trinitarian Congregational Church in North Andover as well as Artistic Director of The Concert Singers.

To learn more about *Champion*,
Terence Blanchard, Emile Griffith, and opera,
please scan the QR code for the
Champion: An Opera in Jazz Study Guide.

