



## **BLO SPOTLIGHTS NEXT GENERATION OF OPERA ARTISTS IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

***Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artist (EA) Initiative announces 15th annual roster of artists; program will be fêted at this fall's Opera Gala 2025.***

***EAs to be featured in new GBH Music/BLO digital video series "Getting Into Opera" collaboration and "Opera Innovators" collaboration with Boston Conservatory.***

***Community events through Fall 2025 offer opera fans and the opera-curious insights to the artform and its artists.***

BOSTON – Sep 10, 2025\*\* – Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) announces the 15th annual roster of **Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artists**, spotlighting a new generation of opera talent through a season of onstage performances, public programs, and collaborative projects. The 2025/26 class (and the program's 15th anniversary) will be celebrated at this fall's **Opera Gala 2025** and featured in two major collaborations: a new digital video series with **GBH Music** and **New England Conservatory**, and the ongoing **Opera Innovators Series** with **Boston Conservatory at Berklee**. Alongside these projects, fall community events featuring Emerging Artists will bring opera fans and newcomers closer to the art form and the artists shaping its future.

### **JANE & STEVEN AKIN EMERGING ARTISTS – 2025/26 SEASON**

Eight outstanding young opera artists are part of the 2025/26 class of Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artists. This season's cohort includes returning artists soprano **Angela Yam**, mezzo-soprano **Mary Kray**, tenor **Morgan Mastrangelo**, and bass-baritones **Zizhao Wang** and **Devon Russo**, joined by soprano **Josie Larsen**, soprano **Laura Santamaria**, and stage director **Alexandra Dietrich**.

They bring experience from leading companies such as The Metropolitan Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Aspen Music Festival, Boston Baroque, and The Huntington Theatre, with honors including Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition wins and American Prize awards. Their training spans Boston University, Manhattan School of Music, New England Conservatory, Brigham Young University and Boston Conservatory at Berklee. [Full bios and photos are here.](#)



L-r.: Alexandra Dietrich, Morgan Mastrangelo, Zizhao Wang, Devon Russo, Mary Kray, Laura Santamaria, Josie Larsen, Angela Yam. All courtesy BLO.

Now in its 15th year, the program is a cornerstone of BLO's identity, offering training, mentorship, and performance opportunities that bridge academic study and professional careers. Alumni now appear with major companies across the U.S. and abroad, underscoring BLO's role in shaping the next generation of opera artists.

"The Emerging Artists Initiative is one of the most important ways Boston Lyric Opera invests in the future of the art form," says **BLO's Stanford Calderwood General Director & CEO Bradley Vernatter**. "It is where the next generation of opera artists find their voices and build their careers. This year's cohort represents extraordinary talent, diverse experiences, and limitless potential. We are proud to support their artistic growth and share their work with Boston audiences."

Benefactors Jane and Steven Akin will be the Leadership Honorees at BLO's Opera Gala in November, where the initiative's 15th anniversary will be celebrated and where funds will be raised.

### **"GETTING INTO OPERA" VIDEO SERIES FEATURES EMERGING ARTISTS**

Current and past Emerging Artists are featured in *Getting Into Opera*, a new six-part digital video series from GBH Music and Boston Lyric Opera that introduces audiences to opera through dynamic masterclasses with world-renowned singers. Filmed at GBH's Fraser Performance Studios before a live audience, the series pairs BLO artists and New England Conservatory students with acclaimed stars Davóne Tines, Susan Graham, and Patricia Racette for coaching in both vocal technique and stagecraft.



Series episodes include tenor **Morgan Mastrangelo** (*La fille du régiment*, Sept. 1), mezzo-soprano **Mary Kray** (*Carmen*, Sept. 8), as well as the EA alumni: soprano **Emily Michiko Jensen** (*La bohème*, Sept. 15); mezzo-soprano **Alexis Peart** (*Ariadne auf Naxos*, Sept. 29); and baritone **Junhan Choi** (*The Pearl Fishers*, Oct. 6). BLO Stanford Calderwood General Director & CEO **Bradley Vernatter** and NEC Opera Chair **Joshua Major** also share insights, with **Anthony Rudel** hosting. Episodes premiere weekly through Oct. 6 on GBH Music's YouTube channel, with companion shorts on Instagram, YouTube Shorts, CRB Classical platforms, and [classical.org](http://classical.org).

"*Getting Into Opera* gives these extraordinary singers a platform and brings audiences behind the curtain to see how great opera (and great opera singers) are made," says BLO Artistic Director Nina Yoshida Nelsen. "We're thrilled to partner with GBH Music to share these stories that help connect opera to a whole new audience."

### **"OPERA INNOVATORS" LIVE SERIES**

Boston Lyric Opera and Boston Conservatory at Berklee's free [Opera Innovators Series](#) returns for its third season, offering masterclasses, workshops, and performances that connect BLO Emerging Artists and Conservatory students with visionary leaders in the field. All public events are free and open to audiences.

Launched in 2022, the series reflects BLO and the Conservatory's shared commitment to both tradition and innovation. Past guests have included world-renowned tenor **Lawrence Brownlee** and soprano **Christine Goerke**.

The 2025/26 lineup features six events at Seully Hall and BLO's Opera + Community Studios, including: masterclasses with baritone **Norman Garrett** (Sept. 28); conductor **Riccardo Frizza** (Oct. 9); director **Melanie Bacaling** (Dec. 5) and soprano **Brenda Rae** (Apr. 12, 2026); a recital by soprano **Karen Slack** (Oct. 21); and a private workshop session with theater innovator **Anne Bogart** (not open to the public, Mar. 1, 2026).

Public Opera Innovators Series events will be available for audiences to stream free at [bostonconservatory.berklee.edu/seully-hall](https://bostonconservatory.berklee.edu/seully-hall) courtesy of a gift from **David and Janet McCue**.

### **BLO FREE COMMUNITY EVENTS FEATURE EMERGING ARTISTS**

Among the opportunities Emerging Artists receive are chances to perform in Boston Lyric Opera's myriad free community events. Such events help the artists hone skills beyond those they use in standard theatre performances, including public speaking, outdoor projection, and audience interaction. Among this fall's events that will include 2025/26 EA artists:

- **BLO Street Stage** – Current Emerging Artists and alums are featured artists at BLO's popular mobile performances that bring free music in a wide variety of genres to neighborhoods around Greater Boston. Street Stage is a 28-foot semi-trailer truck created during the pandemic that opens into a three-sided pop-up stage. Upcoming performances include **Sep. 11 @ 6:30pm** at Curtis Hall in Jamaica Plain and **Sep. 14 @ 4pm** at Titus Sparrow Park in the South End. [blo.org/events](https://blo.org/events).
- **"Opera Night at the Boston Public Library: Women & Ambition"** – Whether seeking a crown, plotting revenge or causing cosmic chaos, opera's female characters grappling with power are heard across centuries of composition. In this conversation-and-concert featuring Emerging Artists **Angela Yam**, Emerging Artist alum **Chelsea Basler** and pianist **Ji Yung Lee**, **BLO Artistic Director Nina Yoshida Nelsen** and psychologist **Dr. Charmain Jackman, Ph.D.** guide audiences through an emotional, psychological and political repertoire. *Sep. 25, 2025, 6 pm, Rabb Hall at the Boston Public Library Central Branch, 700 Boylston St.*
- **BLO at Fort Point Open Studios** – At this annual event where artists and residents of Boston's Fort Point neighborhood open their studios to the public, BLO kicks off its regional "Opera on Tour: Daughter of the Regiment" effort that features family-friendly performances with songs, music and storytelling from the spring 2026 production **DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT**. Expected performers include 2025/26 Emerging Artists Morgan Mastrangelo (EA) and Laura Santamaria (EA), and pianist Patricia Au. *Oct. 18, 2025, 3pm, Midway Artist Studios, 15 Channel Center Street, Boston.*

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**MEDIA:** For details about – or interviews with – the 2025/26 15th Anniversary class of Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artists, contact John Michael Kennedy at [jmk@jmkpr.com](mailto:jmk@jmkpr.com) or 212-842-1752.

*\*\*Some additional format editing was done after 6 pm on Sep. 10.*