

**BOSTON
LYRIC
OPERA**

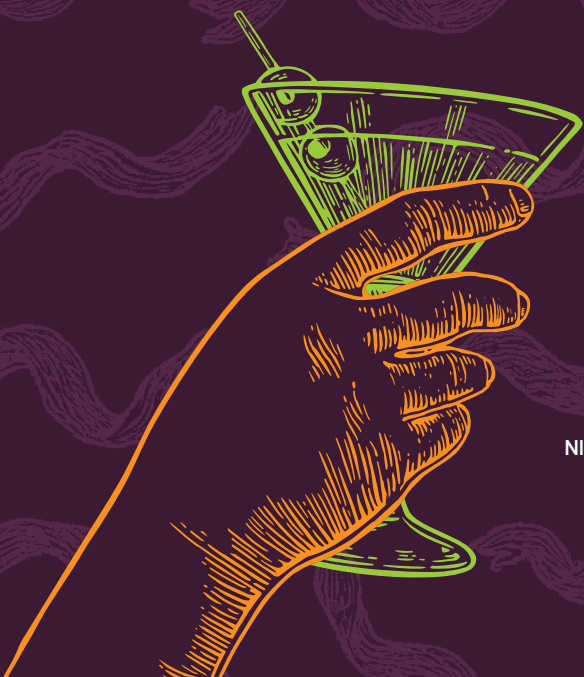
NOV 12, 2025

SoWa Power Station

Festivities begin 5:00PM

Performances begin 8:00PM

THE OPERA GALA & RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES!



BRADLEY VERNATTER

Stanford Calderwood General Director & CEO

NINA YOSHIDA NELSEN

Artistic Director

DAVID ANGUS

Music Director

ANNE BOGART

Artistic Associate

VIMBAYI KAZIBONI

Artistic Advisor

MUSIC IS A VITAL PART OF THE CULTURAL FABRIC OF OUR COMMUNITY.



It's not just about the performances we put on; it's about how we show everything opera can be. From our **Concerts in the Courtyard** to **Street Stage** and innovative programs like **Create Your Own Opera** and our **Audition Workshops**, we're committed to bringing opera into diverse spaces where it can touch lives in meaningful ways.

Help us make wonder possible! Through your support, we're able to engage hundreds of Boston youth, foster deep connections with families, and build a vibrant, inclusive community. Donors like you make it possible for us to offer free community operas and transformative educational experiences, inspiring the next generation through the power of music. *To make your gift, please scan the QR code.*



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Alexis Peart as Mrs. Noah is joined by youth artists from multiple Boston area organizations for BLO's free production of *Noah's Flood* in May 2025.

WELCOME TO THE OPERA GALA & *RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES!*



Dear Friends of the Opera,

Welcome — and thank you for joining us for an evening that celebrates artistry, education, and community. It means a great deal to share this night with so many friends and supporters who care deeply about the art form and Boston's vibrant cultural life.

Tonight's festivities underscore Boston Lyric Opera's heartfelt commitment to nurturing our community through education and access. From free community performances across the region to youth programs like Create Your Own Opera — which foster creativity,

confidence, and a lifelong love of the arts — BLO invests in the next generation of artists and enthusiasts. Central to tonight's celebration is our Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artists Initiative. For the past 15 years, the Emerging Artists Initiative has provided mentorship, training, and performance opportunities that shape young opera professionals and help launch their careers. Tonight, many of these artists take center stage, sharing the spotlight with some of opera's most celebrated voices — and bringing their own boldness and artistry that lie at the heart of the company.

For 49 seasons, BLO has built its reputation on the combination of artistic excellence and an adventurous spirit, showcasing the extraordinary range and vitality of the art form through experiences in theaters and installation productions across the city that invite audiences to connect with the music, the stories, and each other in unexpected and memorable ways. *Ride of the Valkyries!* brings that same innovative energy to the stage — and yes, with a few laughs along the way!

None of this would be possible without your generosity. Your presence tonight affirms our work and helps BLO to continue offering educational programs and inspiring experiences that reach far beyond the stage.

Thank you for being part of our community and for your unwavering dedication to the arts. Together, we celebrate the enduring power of music and storytelling to inspire, unite, and elevate.

Buckle up and enjoy the "ride"!



Bradley Vernatter

Stanford Calderwood
General Director & CEO



Nina Yoshida Nelsen

Artistic Director

UPCOMING BLO EVENTS

NOV 19

A CONVERSATION
WITH ANNE EWERS

Pucker Gallery

DEC 4

OPERA NIGHT

*Boston Public Library,
Central Branch*

DEC 5

OPERA INNOVATORS:
MELANIE BACALING
MASTERCLASS

*Boston Conservatory at
Berklee, Seully Hall*

JAN 8-10

VANESSA

Symphony Hall

FEB 10

MAHLER

SYMPHONY NO. 3

Symphony Hall

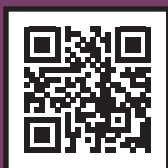
FEB 17-20

OPERA ON TOUR:

DAUGHTER OF
THE REGIMENT

*Boston Public Library,
multiple branches*

**For event details,
visit blo.org/events**



EXPERIENCE BLO'S VALUES IN ACTION:

Learn more about BLO's history,
mission, values, strategic plan,
and more by scanning this QR
code or visiting us at: [BLO.org/about](https://blo.org/about)

Page 2, from top: *Mitridate* (2024) and *Noah's Flood* (2025).

Page 3, from top: Street Stage at Plaza Betances with partners from *Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción* (2025); Create Your Own Opera participants at Saint Brendan School, Dorchester, MA (2025); and Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Carousel* (2025).



FROM TOP: PHOTOS BY BLO STAFF | PHOTO BY NILE SCOTT STUDIOS

BLO IS BIGGER THAN OPERA

We help students find their voice, invest in artists, and unite communities through the transformative power of opera.

Your support brings this shared resource to life. Help us launch a new creative hub for Boston's artists, audiences, and cultural communities.

MICHAEL J. LUTCH



BLO STAFF



BLO STAFF

Opera Connects Communities

Opera provides a bridge between generations and experiences, uniting us through a shared love of music and storytelling. Free productions like this past season's *Noah's Flood* and each summer's Street Stage performances invite audiences to find strength in community, especially in challenging times. Together, we can discover the joy, beauty, and empathy harnessed by opera.

Opera for All Ages

Opera is for everyone. BLO's family-friendly programs engage students, young professionals, and audiences of all ages. From longstanding programs like Create Your Own Opera and Opera on Tour to newer initiatives like the Opera Innovators Series, we introduce a new generation to opera, assist young opera professionals as they enter the field, and demonstrate the power of opera to tell timeless and accessible stories.

Opera for Good: Music as a Mirror for Change

BLO's artistic vision is developed under community-focused initiatives that connect our mainstage productions, public engagement, and education programming under a civic theme. Public programs like Opera Night at the Boston Public Library and initiatives like *Rising Waters/Rising Voices* illuminate our world's challenges through beauty and meaning, inspiring reflection and action.

L-r: Kay Patterson, Oliver Rizzo, and Mary Kray perform *Opera Stories: Hansel & Gretel* for an eager young audience in 2025. Opera Night at the Boston Public Library: *Women & Ambition*, the first 2025/26 event in the longstanding collaboration between BLO and the BPL.



BLO's free community production of *Noah's Flood* at Symphony Hall in 2025.

Centering Artists and Their Journey

BLO nurtures artists at every stage of their careers, from rising talents to celebrated professionals. Over the past 15 years, BLO has invested in the future of opera, with more than 50 artists who have benefited from the Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artists Initiative. This vital initiative offers these artists professional engagement on our stages, opportunities to hone their talents with regular coaching and mentorship, and a platform to amplify their unique voices in and beyond Boston.

Opera + Community Studios: A Hub for Creativity

Responding to a need for expanded cultural space in Boston, BLO's Opera + Community Studios will be a vital resource to the more than 800 artists and arts organizations of all disciplines who will use it annually. To fully realize its potential, we have begun retrofitting construction that will make the space more accessible — creating multiple studios, workspaces, and rehearsal rooms that will be activated with education programming, community gatherings, partner events, and more. This project reflects BLO's long-term vision to make opera and the performing arts more accessible, relevant, and integrated into the life of our city. With your support, the Studios will reopen in March 2026.



NILE SCOTT STUDIOS



T-STOP PICTURES

Angela Yam performs with Lawrence Brownlee in BLO's 2024 production of *Mitridate* during her second year as a Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artist.

Arias Aloft: Gather Together, a 2025 collaboration between BLO, Opera on Tap, and Circus 617 in the Opera + Community Studios.



GETTING INTO OPERA

GBH Music partnered with Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) and New England Conservatory (NEC) to explore the artistry behind opera in a dynamic video series featuring legendary singers Patricia Racette, Susan Graham, and Davóne Tines. Designed for newcomers and seasoned enthusiasts alike, Getting into Opera reveals how powerful performances are shaped through vocal coaching, stage direction, and artistic mentorship.

Filmed in front of a live audience in GBH's acoustically acclaimed Fraser Performance Studio, each episode showcases rising talents from BLO's Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artists Initiative and NEC's opera program.

Episodes are available on GBH Music's YouTube channel.



SCAN FOR
MORE INFO



BOSTONLYRICOPERA

BLO is Celebrating 15 Years of the Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artists Initiative!

The pursuit of a successful career in opera is a challenging and expensive undertaking. BLO proudly provides opportunities and funding for Emerging Artists to hone their talents with regular coaching and mentorship, to expand their repertoire by preparing new roles, and to be heard by diverse audiences in BLO productions and community events. More than 50 artists have benefited from this initiative since its inception.



2025/26 JANE & STEVEN AKIN EMERGING ARTISTS

First row, from left: Alexandra Dietrich *director* | Mary Kray *mezzo-soprano*
Josie Larsen *soprano* | Morgan Mastrangelo *tenor*

Second row, from left: Devon Russo *bass-baritone* | Laura Santamaria *soprano*
Zizhao Wang *bass-baritone* | Angela Yam *soprano*

A MESSAGE FROM BLO'S BOARD CHAIR & BOARD PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Opera Gala and *Ride of the Valkyries*!

This is an exciting evening filled with celebration and great music, and we are delighted to have you with us.

The pursuit of a successful career in opera is an expensive undertaking. With costly conservatory degree programs, travel fees to international summer festivals, and the cost of preparing auditions all over the world, demands on young artists in the field are daunting.

BLO recognizes that the next generation of opera stars needs to be nurtured in order to flourish, and that the future of the art form depends on their success. For the past 15 years, BLO has supported over 50 exceptional young artists through our Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artists Initiative. This initiative provides paid performance opportunities in BLO productions and events, free masterclasses with acclaimed opera leaders, live practice auditions, role and audition preparation workshops, career guidance, and more. Opportunities such as these are invaluable for young artists, with living proof in careers like that of Morris Robinson, who made his professional debut at BLO while still a student.

The Emerging Artists Initiative is just one example of the work that BLO does to ensure the next generation has access to musical training and opportunities to create. From education residencies at K-12 schools to youth workshops and free public concerts, BLO's education and community programming touches thousands in Greater Boston every year.

Thank you for joining us tonight, and for your generous support of BLO. Your impact will extend far beyond tonight's event — this is an investment in the future of opera, the voices that will carry it forward, and the communities they will serve.

With gratitude,

Alicia M. Cooney
Board Chair

Wayne C. Davis
Board President

Board of Directors

Alicia Cooney
Board Chair

Wayne Davis
Board President

Miguel de Bragança
Vice Chair

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*Immediate Past
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Sally Kornbluth
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John Loder
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Anne M. Morgan
A. Neil Pappalardo

Maria Park
Winfield Perry
Susan Rodgerson
Vincent D. Rougeau
Alex Senchak
Peter Wender
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Steven P. Akin
Linda Cabot Black
Willia Bodman
Paul Montrone
Ray Stata

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J.P. Barger♦
Horace H. Irvine II♦
Sherif A. Nada
E. Lee Perry♦

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Tricia Swift
Wynne Szeto
Frank Tempesta

Richard Trant
Amy Tsurumi
Archana
Venkataraman
Robert Walsh
Yin-Yin Wang
Tania Zouikin

As of October 22, 2025

♦ Deceased



**BOSTON
LYRIC
OPERA**

**OPERA
OPENS
WITH
YOU.**

BLO MEMBERS MAKE OPERA OPEN TO ALL —
fueling new productions, nurturing artists, and
bringing free performances to communities across
Greater Boston. Join today and be part of a movement
that keeps opera vibrant, relevant, and accessible.

Make your gift at BLO.org/Membership

NILE SCOTT STUDIOS

The cause? Vital.
The music? Unmissable.
The vibe? 100% BLO.

From the first toast to the final note, it's a night of boldness, brilliance, and community — all in support of making opera more open, joyful, and alive for everyone.

THE OPERA GALA & RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES!

HONOREES

Jane & Steven Akin | *Leadership Honorees*

Lee Pelton | *Community Honoree*

Keith Lockhart | *Artistic Honoree*



BOSTON
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Gala Co-Chairs & Committee

Gala Co-Chairs

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Rumena & Alexander Senchak

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Katie & Paul Bittenwieser
Wayne Davis & Ann Merrifield
Miguel & Suki de Bragança
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Janika LeMaitre
Jo Frances Meyer & Carl Herbert
Maria Park
Winfield & Linda Perry
Janet & Irv Plotkin
Christine & Michael Puzo
Barbara & Andrew Senchak

Gala Sponsors

Titanium | \$50,000

Jane & Steven Akin
Katie & Paul Bittenwieser
Winfield & Linda Perry

Platinum | \$25,000

Linda Cabot Black
Willa & Taylor Bodman *in honor of*
 Jane & Steven Akin
Alicia Cooney & Stephen Quigley
Wayne Davis & Ann Merrifield
Maria Park
Michael & Christine Puzo

Gold | \$15,000

Miguel & Suki de Bragança
Janika & George LeMaitre
Janet & Irv Plotkin
Russell Philanthropies

Silver | \$5,000

Mark & Pam Alcaide
Bill & Vicki Barke
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Barbara & Andrew Senchak
Rumena & Alexander Senchak
Jerry Wheelock & Elizabeth Wood

Gala Chairs & Committee as of
Monday, September 15, 2025
Gala Sponsors as of Friday
October 31, 2025

Honorees & Awards

BLO is proud to honor these extraordinary individuals for their remarkable contributions to the opera community in Boston and beyond.



Leadership Honorees Jane & Steven Akin

Jane & Steven Akin are long-serving members of BLO's Board of Directors, and the namesakes of the Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artists Initiative.

Jane and Steve met and briefly dated in college at Ohio Wesleyan University. Jane graduated from the conservatory with majors in voice and piano, while Steve earned a degree in economics. After graduation, Jane moved to New York City to pursue her music career. Serendipitously, their paths crossed walking around Columbus Circle. Their journey growing together resulted from that reunion, inspiring a shared desire to make a difference supporting their families, communities and the arts.

Pursuing Steve's career opportunities, they lived in New York City, Ohio, Indiana, Kansas, Boston, London, and Naples. Jane established herself in the arts, while Steve developed his executive management and leadership skills. Jane often volunteered her expertise to support local symphonies and opera companies, strengthening arts communities and securing performance venues. Steve's career advanced through senior executive management roles at Sprint and Fidelity, gaining insights he wished were available for artists navigating their careers.

Together, they served as leaders and benefactors for organizations such as the Mansfield Symphony, Kansas City Lyric Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, and Gulfshore Playhouse. Recognizing the lack of guidance for emerging artists, they embraced Boston Lyric Opera's innovative program to mentor young talent professionally and financially, ensuring a vibrant future for the arts.





Community Honoree Lee Pelton

Lee Pelton — recognized in 2024 by *The NonProfit Times* as one of America's 50 most powerful and influential nonprofit leaders — serves as President and CEO of The Boston Foundation. He joined TBF after presidencies at Emerson College and Willamette University, bringing decades of leadership experience in education and civic engagement. At The Boston Foundation, Pelton has positioned the organization as a leading agent for social change, centering equity and addressing the structural causes of disparities affecting historically marginalized communities. Known for embracing challenges beyond his comfort zone, Pelton co-curated Steve McQueen's *Lynching Tree* exhibition with Peggy Fogelman at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and appeared in Boston Lyric Opera's 2025 production of *Carousel* as Dr. Seldon/Starkeeper. He has received numerous honors for educational excellence and social justice, including the Harvard Medal (2024), and is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. *Boston Magazine* has repeatedly named him among the "150 Most Influential Bostonians." Pelton serves as an advisor to the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Project and sits on the boards of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, WGBH, The Barr Foundation, and the Urban Institute.



Artistic Honoree Keith Lockhart

Keith Lockhart marks his 30th anniversary as Conductor of the Boston Pops in 2025, a tenure that includes over 2,250 performances, 45 national tours to over 150 cities, five international tours, and high-profile events like the annual July 4 Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular and Super Bowl XXXVI. He is also Artistic Director of the Brevard Music Center. Lockhart's first collaboration with Boston Lyric Opera was in 2004 when he conducted *Tosca*, returning in subsequent years for *Madama Butterfly*, *Tales of Hoffmann*, and *Carmen*. He has conducted nearly every major orchestra in North America, as well as various orchestras internationally. As Principal Conductor of the BBC Concert Orchestra, he conducted annual Proms performances, as well as Queen Elizabeth II's gala Diamond Jubilee Concert. During his tenure as Music Director of the Utah Symphony, he stood at the front of that organization's historic merger with Utah Opera and led the symphony during Opening Ceremonies of the 2002 Olympic Winter Games. Lockhart holds degrees from Furman University and Carnegie Mellon University, as well as numerous honorary doctorates. He was the 2006 recipient of the Bob Hope Patriot Award from the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, and was a recipient of the 2017 Commonwealth Award, Massachusetts' highest cultural honor.



Stephen Shrestinian Award for Excellence **Mary Kray**

Mary Kray is a Boston-based mezzo-soprano and returning Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artist at Boston Lyric Opera. She is thrilled to return for the 2025 season, having recently appeared as Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* for BLO's Opera on Tour educational program and as Second Woman in BLO's production of *Carousel*. Kray has performed a wide range of operatic and concert repertoire with local organizations such as Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Opera Collaborative, and NEMPAC Opera Project. Operatic highlights include Orfeo in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* and Marcellina in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. As a concert soloist, she has performed as the alto soloist in Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Bach's *Magnificat*, Mozart's *Vespers*, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, and Handel's *Messiah*. She has received numerous awards at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (2018-21) and received recognition from the National Society of Arts and Letters. A graduate of Boston Conservatory at Berklee with an M.M. in opera performance, Kray also teaches musicianship at the Handel + Haydn Society and maintains a private voice studio. She brings a trauma-informed and compassionate approach to her teaching and performance practice.



Emcee Neal Ferreira

Neal Ferreira is a nationally recognized lyric tenor known for his dynamic stage presence and cultivated vocalism. A recipient of the 2009 Stephen Shrestinian Award for Excellence and a member of the inaugural class of the Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artists Initiative, he has appeared with Boston Lyric Opera in more than 25 productions. Favorite roles with the company include Loud Stone in *Eurydice*, Auctioneer/Taylor in *Omar*, Jazz Trio in *Trouble in Tahiti*, The Visitor in *In the Penal Colony*, Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*, and Tancredi in *The Inspector*. Ferreira regularly sings with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and this past summer performed as Spoletta in *Tosca* at Tanglewood under the baton of Maestro Andris Nelsons. He recently appeared with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project as Aubrey in Ulysses Kay's *Frederick Douglass* and with Odyssey Opera as Alpheus/Ares in Mark Adamo's *Lysistrata*. This season, he will return to the Commonwealth Shakespeare Company as Fezziwig in *A Christmas Carol*, sing Iopas in *Les Troyens à Carthage* with the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras, and perform as the Duchess of Krakenthorp in BLO's new production of *Daughter of the Regiment*. Ferreira is an Assistant Professor of Voice at Berklee College of Music.



Opera Innovators Series

Presented in partnership by **Boston Lyric Opera & Boston Conservatory at Berklee**, the Opera Innovators Series brings together visionary artists & creative leaders in opera for a dynamic educational & professional development program.

This series offers BLO's Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artists and BCB voice students unparalleled access to groundbreaking perspectives, fostering the next generation of opera's innovators.



OPERA INNOVATORS SERIES

Melanie Bacaling Masterclass | FRI, DEC 5

Anne Bogart Workshop | SUN, MAR 1

Brenda Rae Masterclass | SUN, APR 12

◀ [LEARN MORE](#)

Thank you to David & Janet McCue for their generous support of Boston Lyric Opera in presenting the Opera Innovators Series this season.

A man with a beard and short dark hair, wearing a black shirt and a gold-sequined tuxedo jacket, is posing against a dark background. He is holding a large, reflective disco ball in his left hand, which is raised above his head. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting his face and the sequins on his jacket.

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**HOLD ON TO YOUR
HORNED HELMETS.**

RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES!

Performed with members of the
BOSTON LYRIC OPERA ORCHESTRA
and the JANE & STEVEN AKIN
EMERGING ARTISTS INITIATIVE

*Sung in multiple languages
with English surtitles.*

David Angus, BLO Music Director
2025/26 Season Sponsor
Linda Cabot Black

PERFORMANCE

WED, NOV 12, 2025 | 8:00PM

Approximate running time:
1 hour 15 minutes with
no intermission

SOWA POWER STATION
550 Harrison Avenue
Boston, MA 02118

**BOSTON
LYRIC
OPERA**



CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor

DAVID ANGUS

Writer & Director

JAMES BLASZKO

Narration by

DAVID HYDE PIERCE*

Additional Creatives

JANICE BLAIR*

JOSHUA HIGGASON

TAYLOR MCMAHON*

Boston Lyric Opera Orchestra

ANNIE RABBAT *Orchestra Leader*

Rehearsal Coach/Pianist

BRETT HODGDON▼

Stage Manager

MICHAEL JANNEY

CAST

CHRISTINE GOERKE

MORRIS ROBINSON

CHELSEA BASLER▼

JUNHAN CHOI▼

MARY KRAY●

JOSIE LARSEN●

OMAR NAJMI▼

MICHELLE TRAINOR▼

ZIZHAO WANG●

DANCERS

MILENA COMEAU*

HANNAH FRANZ*

TULA JOHNSON*

TAYLOR MCMAHON*

CHRISTINE SPELLMAN*

KYLAH WALKER*

Morris Robinson's appearance is supported by Jane and Steven Akin.

Ring Cycle orchestral arrangements by Jonathan Dove.

Other arrangements by Tony Rickard.

* Boston Lyric Opera Debut

✦ Boston Lyric Opera Principal Debut

● Boston Lyric Opera Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artist

▼ Boston Lyric Opera Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artist Alum

Musical Program

PROLOGUE

"Divertissement"

by Jacques Ibert

THE VALKYRIES AND THEIR HORSES

"Ride of the Valkyries" from *Die Walküre*

Music & Libretto by Richard Wagner

"Hoiho! Hoihohoho!" from *Götterdämmerung*

Music & Libretto by Richard Wagner

"I got plenty o' nothin' " from *Porgy & Bess*

Music by George Gershwin

Libretto by DuBose Heyward & Ira Gershwin

"Hojotoho!" from *Die Walküre*

Music & Libretto by Richard Wagner

"In questa reggia" from *Turandot*

Music by Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Giuseppe Adami & Renato Simoni

"In diesen heil'gen Hallen" from *Die Zauberflöte*

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder

THE RHINEMAIDENS GO FOR GOLD!

"Rheingold! Rheingold!" from *Das Rheingold*

Music & Libretto by Richard Wagner

"Nous avons en tête une affaire" from *Carmen*

Music by Georges Bizet

Libretto by Ludovic Halévy & Henri Meilhac

"The Impossible Dream" from *Man of La Mancha*

Music by Mitch Leigh

Lyrics by Joe Darion

"Champagne Chorus" from *Die Fledermaus*

Music by Johann Strauss II

Libretto by Karl Haffner & Richard Genée

Musical Program

SELLING VALHALLA

"Mögst du, mein Kind" from *Der fliegende Holländer*

Music & Libretto by Richard Wagner

"100 Easy Ways" from *Wonderful Town*

Music by Leonard Bernstein

Lyrics by Betty Comden & Adolph Green

"Can-Can" from *Orphée aux enfers* / "Overture" from *William Tell*

Music by Jacques Offenbach / Gioachino Rossini

"Dich, teure Halle" from *Tannhäuser*

Music & Libretto by Richard Wagner

THE MISTERS AND THEIR SISTERS

"Sisters" from *White Christmas*

Music & Lyrics by Irving Berlin

Additional lyrics by James Blaszko

"Du bist der Lenz" from *Die Walküre*

Music & Libretto by Richard Wagner

"Là ci darem la mano" from *Don Giovanni*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte

"Hélas! Mon coeur s'égaré encore!" from *Les contes d'Hoffmann*

Music by Jacques Offenbach

Libretto by Jules Barbier



NILE SCOTT STUDIOS

Members of the *Aida* cast and the BLO community at The Opera Gala 2024.

Here we are. Together. Assembled for music, for conversation, for entertainment, to reconnect with familiar faces and to meet new ones. We are here to show support for Boston Lyric Opera. We are here to sustain the art — but also to taste, collectively, a fleeting sense of joy.

It may be tempting to say that we are gathered “for BLO”: to honor an institution, to celebrate its artists, and its achievements. And indeed, art and artists are at the heart of this evening. But perhaps something deeper has drawn us here, something older than any organization: an ancient human need to gather in a festive way, to step outside the routines of daily life and taste — however briefly — the elixir of shared human experience. Tonight, distinctions blur, hierarchies soften, and we rediscover a more essential truth: that we are not simply solitary beings experiencing an event together, but participants in a greater community.

The word “gala” carries this sense of festive belonging. Derived from the French expression “en gala,” meaning “festive attire,” it traces its origins to traditions of joy, celebration, and refined gatherings. Over time, it evolved to signify a lively event distinguished by its elegance, sense of festivity, and the coming together of a community — a meaning closely linked to the word “gallant,” which connotes stylishness and celebratory spirit. Both terms trace back to concepts of goodness and joyful spirit.

On the surface, a gala may be known for fine food, lively entertainment, music, speeches, and the recognition of those who shape an organization’s life. But the true power of the event lies in rising above outward appearances. A gala opens

a window of time in which ordinary life pauses. In its place emerges laughter, song, conversation, and connection. Anthropologists call this extraordinary condition *communitas* — a heightened sense of intimacy, equality, and shared humanity that arises when people celebrate together.

This sense of *communitas* matters profoundly, especially because human beings — myself included — are also skilled at turning inward when life becomes complicated. In response to hardship or sorrow, I often find myself withdrawing from the world, erecting internal barricades and standing behind emotional walls in search of safety. Compartmentalizing my feelings and seeking solitude can feel protective at first, but with each recurrence of disappointment or pain, the temptation grows to retreat even further, shutting others out and reinforcing my own isolation. What began as a strategy to shield myself soon hardens into a kind of prison, where comfort slips away and loneliness deepens. Yet, within this pattern of retreat, I notice a flicker of longing, a quiet hope for connection that persists beneath the surface, reminding me that this protective distance comes at a cost. Beneath my instinct to stay guarded lies the uneasy truth that separation is ultimately unsustainable. I sense, alongside my pain, a wellspring of vitality and an enduring urge to return to the world and reclaim my place within it. This universal tension, between isolation and the desire for togetherness, reveals why the experience of *communitas* is so essential. Deep within, I know that alongside my pain there is also abundant vitality, an enduring urge to rejoin the world and reclaim connection.

"...the experience of *communitas* is so essential."

What rescues us from isolation is wonder. More than a fleeting mood, it is a generative force that dissolves barriers and draws us into shared experience. This power of wonder animates *communitas*, transforming differences into common joy and allowing us to participate in something greater than ourselves. Festivals, art, and collective storytelling all nourish this capacity for wonder, drawing us back into the circle of life we long to join.

Storytelling, in particular, deepens this movement toward connection. Neuroscience shows that when we immerse ourselves in fiction — whether on a stage, on a page, or around a table — our brains respond as if the story were happening to us. We feel empathy, expand perspective, and grow emotionally. Stories remind us of our capacity to develop and change; they gently suggest that our habits, defenses, and limitations need not define us. They invite playfulness, laughter, and release. This embodied experience of story makes openness possible, keeping us tender, alive, and receptive to transformation.

This cultivated openness sets the stage for *metanoia*, a meaningful transformation born out of genuine engagement and curiosity, rather than regret or sorrow. In Greek, *metanoia* refers to a conscious decision to change one's mind or heart, setting it apart from repentance, which is shaped by feelings of guilt or grief. This form of change involves turning towards new possibilities, adopting fresh perspectives, and allowing for personal growth. Unlike merely seeking to escape past mistakes, *metanoia* is about embracing a new way of living with intention and openness. Sustained wonder, especially when nurtured by stories and honest reflection, makes this profound transformation possible; and in this way, *metanoia* becomes not just desirable but truly attainable.

Imagine for a moment that we are standing together, side by side, with others, forming a circle in the midst of a vast darkness. At the very center of this circle, a bright light burns steadily, illuminating the space — yet, unlike you, I am standing with my back to the light. My gaze is fixed outward, facing only the surrounding darkness. In this position, I am like Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, turned away from the glow at the

center, unaware of the shared faces, warmth, and connection that the light so generously illuminates. All that I perceive is my own silhouette projected in front of me, my shadow stretched endlessly into the night. The radiance behind me is invisible. I cannot see the light itself, nor can I see you or anyone else who shares this circle. I am cut off, utterly alone with my own shadow, unable to perceive our connection in the darkness.

But now, picture what happens when I muster the courage to turn around. As I shift and face the center, the darkness recedes. My shadow falls away behind me, and suddenly I am bathed in the same warm light that reaches all of us. I see you clearly along with everyone else gathered in this circle. Illuminated together, we are revealed as companions, bound not just by proximity, but by the shared warmth and brightness that enfolds us all. In this moment, I understand how easily one can feel alone simply by turning away, and how connection is restored in an instant by the decision to face the light.

Making the decision to turn around, to turn away from darkness, to face the light: this is *metanoia*.

William James used the word *metanoia* to describe a process of fundamental change in the human personality; an essential and stable change in an individual's life-orientation. Carl Jung also employed *metanoia* to depict a spontaneous attempt of the psyche to heal itself of unbearable conflict by melting down and then being reborn in a more adaptive form. In transactional analysis, *metanoia* is used to illustrate the experience of abandoning an old-scripted self, or false self, for a more open one: a process which may be marked by a mixture of intensity, despair, self-surrender, and an encounter with the inner void.

And so, a gala is far more than an elegant evening. It becomes a living metaphor for the human condition, a ritual of turning, both individually and together. In the shared experience of music, conversation, and celebration, we rediscover that life is not sustained by survival alone but by beauty, meaning, and connection. The gathering reminds us that art is not peripheral to existence, but rather woven into its essence, a compass pointing us outward to one another and inward to our deepest capacities for imagination and renewal.

MEET THE ARTISTS



DAVID ANGUS | Conductor

Now in his sixteenth year as Boston Lyric Opera's music director, Anglo-Danish conductor David Angus recently served as music director and conductor for BLO's 80th-anniversary revival of *Carousel*, directed by Anne Bogart. Other highlights of his BLO career include a new production of *Mitridate*, the critically acclaimed online productions of *desert in* and *The Fall of the House of Usher*, BLO's backwards *La bohème*, and Anne Bogart's striking production of *Bluebeard's Castle / Four Songs*. In addition to his work with BLO, he conducted a new *Sweeney Todd* at the Royal Opera in Stockholm, *The Marriage of Figaro* in Prague, and several recordings of new American works with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Prior to BLO, Angus was music director of The Glimmerglass Festival and Chief Conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of Flanders. He has led orchestras and choirs throughout Europe, particularly in Scandinavia, including the Lahti Symphony Orchestra and several Danish orchestras. He has conducted most of the major orchestras in Great Britain, including the London Philharmonic, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hallé Orchestra, most of the BBC orchestras, the London Mozart Players, and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. He has also conducted the Toscanini Orchestra in Parma, the Porto Symphony Orchestra in Portugal, Wexford Festival Opera, the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the LPO, and the Huddersfield Choral Society, as well as his former orchestra in Belgium. Angus was a boy chorister at King's College under Sir David Willcocks and read music at Surrey University. He was a conducting fellow at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, where he won several prizes for opera conducting.



JAMES BLASZKO | Writer & Director

James Blaszkowski is a first-generation American director who made his BLO debut in 2022 as Revival Director of *La bohème*. Blaszkowski has directed/co-created several concert works and special events, including *Soundcake: Aural Confections* by Sapphira Cristál & Monét X Change, Lincoln Center; *We Count*, Harare International Festival of the Arts; and *Puccini and Verdi*

Play Ball, Tulsa Opera. His fully staged opera credits include *Il trittico*, Daegu International Opera Festival, Korea; *Xerxes*, Detroit Opera; and *La liberazione di Ruggiero...*, Manhattan School of Music. *Swann*, a Catapult digital opera short directed by Blaszkowski and composed by Tamar-kali, was a finalist for Opera America's 2024 Digital Excellence in Opera Award, and his short documentary *Zenon* was an official selection of the New Haven Documentary Film Festival. After staging and translating Sapphira Cristál's maxi challenge-winning performance of "O mio babbino caro" for *RuPaul's Drag Race* on MTV, he directed and produced a music video of the same aria, which has over 175,000 views on YouTube. Blaszkowski is a co-founder of *Apotheculture Club*, a new audience cultivation initiative that pairs the performing arts with the legal consumption of cannabis. The club has produced events nationwide, supporting companies such as Detroit Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and the Santa Fe Symphony. @apothecultureclub



DAVID HYDE PIERCE | Narration

David Hyde Pierce is an Emmy and Tony Award-winning actor and director who most recently appeared on Broadway in *Pirates! The Penzance Musical*, a reimagining of the Gilbert & Sullivan classic. Previously he was seen in Stephen Sondheim's final musical, *Here We Are*. Broadway credits include *Hello, Dolly!* (Tony nomination), *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (Tony nomination), *La Bête*, *Curtains* (Tony Award), *Spamalot*, *The Heidi Chronicles* and *Beyond Therapy*. Along with originating numerous roles Off-Broadway, he's appeared in productions of Shakespeare, Shaw, Chekov, Moliere and Philip Barry at the Guthrie, Goodman, and Long Wharf theaters. He directed Brian Hargrove and Barbara Anselmi's *It Shoulda Been You* on Broadway, *Vanya and Sonia* at Los Angeles' Mark Taper Forum, David Lindsay-Abaire's *Ripcord* at MTC, and a gangster-themed *Importance of Being Earnest* at Williamstown Theatre Festival. Film credits include *Bright Lights*, *Big City*, *Crossing Delancey*, *Little Man Tate*, *Sleepless in Seattle*, *Wolf, Nixon, Isn't She Great*, *Wet Hot American Summer*, *Down With Love*, *A Bug's Life*, *Osmosis Jones*, *Treasure Planet*, and *The Perfect Host*. Television roles include a suicidal congressman on Norman Lear's political

satire “The Powers That Be,” 11 seasons as Dr. Niles Crane on “Frasier” (Emmy, SAG Awards), and most recently Julia Child’s devoted husband Paul on the HBO Max series, *Julia*.



CHRISTINE GOERKE | Soprano

Soprano Christine Goerke has sung much of the great soprano repertoire, beginning with the Mozart and Handel heroines and moving into dramatic Strauss and Wagner roles, in the most important opera houses of the world including the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Royal Opera House, Paris Opera, and the Teatro alla Scala. She has also appeared with a number of leading orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra at the BBC Proms, and Sydney Symphony. Her recording of Vaughan Williams’ *A Sea Symphony* with Robert Spano and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra won the 2003 GRAMMY® Award for Best Classical Recording and Best Choral Performance. Her close association with Robert Shaw yielded several recordings, including Brahms’ *Liebeslieder Waltzes*, Poulenc’s *Stabat Mater*, Szymanowski’s *Stabat Mater*, and the GRAMMY®-nominated recording of Dvořák’s *Stabat Mater*. Other recordings include the title role in *Iphigenie en Tauride* for Telarc, and Britten’s *War Requiem*, which won the 1999 GRAMMY® Award for Best Choral Performance. Ms. Goerke was the recipient of the 2001 Richard Tucker Award, the 2015 Musical American Vocalist of the Year Award, and the 2017 Opera News Award.



MORRIS ROBINSON | Bass

American bass Morris Robinson has performed with many of the world’s leading opera companies, including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Teatro alla Scala, and the Aix-en-Provence Festival. Also a prolific concert singer, Mr. Robinson has appeared with the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic,

National Symphony Orchestra, São Paulo Symphony Orchestra, and the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra; and at the BBC Proms and the Ravinia, Mostly Mozart, Tanglewood, Cincinnati May, Verbier, and Aspen festivals. He also appeared at Carnegie Hall as part of Jessye Norman’s *HONOR!* Festival. In recital he has been presented by Spivey Hall in Atlanta, the Savannah Music Festival, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Mr. Robinson’s first album, *Going Home*, was released by Decca. He is also a featured artist on the LA Philharmonic’s recording of Mahler’s *Symphony No. 8*, which won the 2022 GRAMMY® Award for Best Choral Performance. An Atlanta native, Mr. Robinson is a graduate of The Citadel and an alumnus of the Metropolitan Lindemann Young Artists Program. He is currently Artistic Advisor to Cincinnati Opera.



CHELSEA BASLER | Soprano

GRAMMY® Award-nominated soprano Chelsea Basler continues to make her mark in an extensive array of operatic roles due to her unique combination of vocal appeal and artistry. During the 2024/25 season, Ms. Basler sang High Priestess in Boston Lyric Opera’s production of *Aida* and covered Julie Jordan in *Carousel*. Past roles with BLO include covering Eurydice in Aucoin’s *Eurydice* and singing Musetta in *La bohème*. Ms. Basler enjoys a particularly strong relationship with BLO, which she initially joined as an Emerging Artist during the 2013/14 season. Other recent work includes returning to The Metropolitan Opera to cover Blanche in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, as well as making her role debut as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* with Newport Classical.



JUNHAN CHOI | Baritone

In the 2025/26 season, baritone Junhan Choi’s engagements include the role of Schaunard in Puccini’s *La bohème* with Cambridge Symphony Orchestra, as well as Pantheus in Berlioz’s *Les Troyens* and Frate in Verdi’s *Don Carlos* with the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras. He also appeared as Belcore in Donizetti’s *L’elisir d’amore* with the Bar Harbor Music Festival. As a former Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artist with the Boston Lyric

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Opera, he has appeared in roles such as bass soloist in *Eurydice*, Registrar & Commissioner in *Madama Butterfly*, Dandini (cover) in *La Cenerentola*, and Schaunard (cover) and Alcindoro in *La bohème*. He has earned recognition in numerous international competitions, including three Extraordinary Prizes at the 54th Viñas International Voice Competition and a Golden Medal at the Berliner International Music Competition. After winning first prize in the 2017 Talents of the World International Voice Competition, he made his Carnegie Hall debut as a baritone soloist for the “Tribute to Dmitri Hvorostovsky” concert. Choi holds a master’s degree and a graduate diploma from the New England Conservatory of Music, where he studied on a Presidential Scholarship.



ALEXANDRA DIETRICH |

Assistant Stage Director

Alexandra Dietrich, originally from Freeport, Maine, is a Puerto Rican American stage director. At Boston

Lyric Opera, Ms. Dietrich was the Intimacy Director for *The Seasons*, as well as the Assistant Stage Director for *Macbeth*, *Mitridate* and *The Seasons*. Notable works include directing *Glory Denied* at Opera Company of Middlebury, *A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder* and *Little Women*, *The Broadway Musical* at Marblehead Little Theatre, *The Little Prince* at both the Longy School of Music of Bard and NEMPAC Opera, and *La tragédie de Carmen* at Boston Opera Collaborative. Recently, she was Assistant Director to Loretta Greco for *The Light in the Piazza* at The Huntington, and to James Robinson for *Awakenings* at Odyssey Opera. She served on the voice faculty at the University of Southern Maine Osher School of Music as an Artist Faculty in Voice from 2019-2025. With the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Ms. Dietrich was an Associate Artistic Producer on the GRAMMY®-nominated recording of Anthony Davis’s *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*.



MARY KRAY | Mezzo-soprano

Mary Kray is a Boston-based mezzo-soprano and returning Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artist at Boston Lyric Opera. She is thrilled to return for the 2025 season, having recently appeared as Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* for BLO’s Opera on

Tour educational program and as Second Woman in BLO’s production of *Carousel*. Kray has performed a wide range of operatic and concert repertoire with local organizations such as Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Opera Collaborative, and NEMPAC Opera Project. Operatic highlights include Orfeo in Gluck’s *Orfeo ed Euridice* and Marcellina in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*. As a concert soloist, she has performed as the alto soloist in Vivaldi’s *Gloria*, Bach’s *Magnificat*, Mozart’s *Vespers*, Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9*, and Handel’s *Messiah*. She has received numerous awards at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (2018-21) and received recognition from the National Society of Arts and Letters. A graduate of Boston Conservatory at Berklee with an M.M. in opera performance, Kray also teaches musicianship at the Handel + Haydn Society and maintains a private voice studio. She brings a trauma-informed and compassionate approach to her teaching and performance practice.



JOSIE LARSEN | Soprano

Josie Larsen, a student of Bradley Williams, is a lyric soprano from Sammamish, Washington, joining Boston Lyric Opera as a Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artist for the 2025/26 Season. She has performed as Annunciata in Bolcom’s *Lucrezia*, Fiordiligi in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, Elaine in Musto’s *Later the Same Evening*, Rosalinda in Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus*, Mimi in Puccini’s *La bohème*, and the Governess in Britten’s *The Turn of the Screw*. Additionally, she has covered Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* at Music Academy of the West and the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Aspen Music Festival. Concert work includes performances of the Brahms *Requiem*, Mozart’s *Mass in C Minor*, and *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5* by Villa-Lobos, as well as “From Jewish Folk Poetry” as part of the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s *Decoding Shostakovich* series. Larsen completed her bachelor’s degree at Brigham Young University in 2021, her master’s degree at the New England Conservatory in 2023, and her Artist Diploma also at the New England Conservatory in 2025. She is a 2026/27 Member of the Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago. Larsen’s greatest joy in music is connecting people across many languages and cultures in a common musical experience.

**OMAR NAJMI | Tenor**

GRAMMY®-nominated tenor and composer Omar Najmi has appeared regularly with Boston Lyric Opera. Recent BLO roles include Malcolm

in *Macbeth*, Enoch Snow in *Carousel*, Valcour in *The Anonymous Lover*, Tybalt in *Romeo & Juliet*, Beppe in *Pagliacci*, and Nick in *The Handmaid's Tale*. Other recent and upcoming credits include: Peter Quint in *The Turn of the Screw*, Spoleto Festival; Simon in *Adoration*, LA Opera; Demler in *Frederick Douglass*, Odyssey Opera; Handel's *Messiah*, Boston Baroque and Seattle Symphony; Ruggero in *La rondine*, Opera on the James; Alessandro in *Il re pastore*; Orpheus PDX; and Shakur in *Thumbprint*, Portland Opera. As a composer, Najmi was a 2025 participant in Washington National Opera's American Opera Initiative, where his and librettist Christine Evans' opera *Mud Girl* was premiered at The Kennedy Center. His and librettist Cailin Smith's opera *The Elevator Trial* will be premiered in 2026 by Boston Opera Collaborative. He has also had works commissioned by Boston Lyric Opera, Atlanta Opera, White Snake Projects, Juventas New Music Ensemble, and Emmanuel Music.

**MICHELLE TRAINOR |**

Mezzo-soprano

Michelle Trainor, alumna of the inaugural class of Boston Lyric Opera's Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artists

Initiative, has performed an extensive range of roles with BLO, including Miss Lightfoot, *Fellow Travelers*; Ofglen, *The Handmaid's Tale*; Berta, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*; Mrs. Peachum, *The Threepenny Opera*; Helen McDougal, *Burke and Hare*; Marcellina, *Le nozze di Figaro*; Olga/Lolo, *The Merry Widow*; Brangain, *The Love Potion*; Second Lady, *The Magic Flute*; Hagar, *Hagar's Lament/Clemency*; Bombalina, *The Inspector*; and Lady-in-Waiting, *Macbeth*. She has also appeared with companies including Bulgaria's State Opera Ruse, Detroit Opera, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Opera Columbus, Odyssey Opera, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Tuscia Operafestival, IlluminArts, and Enigma Chamber Opera. Her discography features *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon), *Awakenings*

and *La reine de Saba* with Odyssey Opera, *Hamlet* with The Shakespeare Concert Series, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* with BMOP, and *Clemency* with Boston Lyric Opera. Trainor opened her 2025/26 season as Aksinya in Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* with the Romanian Radio National Orchestra at the George Enescu Festival, a role she debuted with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Later this season, she reprises Berta in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Helena Symphony.

**ZIZHAO WANG | Bass-baritone**

Chinese-born bass-baritone Zizhao Wang is a current Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artist with Boston Lyric Opera, where he has appeared

as First Apparition/Assassin/Herald/Valet in *Macbeth*, performed in the Concert in the Courtyard, covered the Cosmic Weatherman in the world premiere of *The Seasons*, and performed as the Third Man/Baritone Soloist/Sailor in *Carousel*. In the 2025/26 season, Wang returns to Houston for the 2026 revival of *The Big Swim*, a co-production of Houston Grand Opera and Asia Society Texas. As a Resident Artist at the 2025 Glimmerglass Festival, he performed the roles of Bum Man, Munch, and Tree in the world premiere of *The House on Mango Street*, as well as covering the Sacristan and Jailer in *Tosca*. Wang was awarded second place in the New England Regional Finals of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition in 2019. His recent roles include Tiger & Rooster, *The Big Swim*, Houston Grand Opera / Asia Society Texas; Bartolo, *Le nozze di Figaro*, Knoxville Opera; Martino, *L'occasione fa il ladro*, Opera Southwest; Colline, *La bohème*, New England Conservatory; Imperial Commissioner, *Madama Butterfly*, Virginia Opera; and Yang Yaozu, *Country & Home*, Chinese National Opera Festival.

**BRADLEY VERNATTER |**

Stanford Calderwood General Director & CEO

Bradley Vernatter is the Stanford Calderwood General Director &

Chief Executive Officer of Boston Lyric Opera, the company's top leadership role. Now in his 13th year with BLO and leading the company since 2021, he has guided BLO's recovery from the pan-

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demic, driven the funding campaign for and the move into its Opera + Community Studios, and shaped the organization's strategic plan, which will lead BLO into its 50th anniversary season in 2026/27. Throughout his career, Vernatter has produced a range of operas, multi-disciplinary performances, and media productions. In 2020, he was recognized by Boston Business Journal as one of Boston's "40 Under 40" rising young leaders. He was a member of the YW Boston LeadBoston 2022 cohort and served on the board of advisors at Artists For Humanity, a non-profit that empowers teens through employment in the arts. Additionally, he contributes to social entrepreneurship projects addressing access to basic services. Previously, Vernatter served as BLO's Acting General and Artistic Director, after having served as the company's Chief Operating Officer. Before BLO, he was Director of Operations for Opera Omaha and Associate Producer for the company's ONE Festival. He held artistic and management positions with Wexford Festival Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, the Castleton (VA) Festival, and the Miller Theatre at Columbia University. Vernatter holds a Master of Business Administration from the IE-Brown MBA program (Madrid/Providence, R.I.), a Bachelor of Arts from Otterbein College, 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 grant reviewer.



NINA YOSHIDA NELSEN |

Artistic Director

Nina Yoshida Nelsen (she/her) made her Boston Lyric Opera debut in 2021 as Mamma Lucia, *Cavalleria*

Rusticana. She was featured as a singer and storyteller in the filmed documentary-concert *B.*, which marked an artistic culmination of BLO's "The Butterfly Process." She joined the company as an Artistic Advisor in 2021, participating in artistic discussions and decisions, company auditions, and more. Most recently, she served as dramaturg for BLO's widely acclaimed 2023 production of *Madama Butterfly*. Nelsen has performed traditional and contemporary operatic roles throughout North America and Europe, including performances with Washington National Opera, Lincoln Center, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, and Avery Fisher Hall. She continues to perform actively with companies across the United States and Canada. Recent and upcoming work includes classic and contemporary repertoire with regional and nationally recognized opera houses. As Co-Founder of the Asian Opera Alliance, Nelsen has worked to uplift Asian artists and to advocate for greater representation within the industry. She was recently featured in TIME Magazine and was the subject of an NHK World documentary centered on Jack Perla and Jessica Murphy Moo's opera *An American Dream* and Nelsen's origination of the role of Hiroko Kobayashi at Seattle Opera. A Boston University alumna, Nelsen received undergraduate degrees in violin and psychology, and a master's degree in voice. She also holds an Artist Diploma from Philadelphia's Academy of Vocal Arts.



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Annie Rabbat
Orchestra Leader
Heidi Braun-Hill *Acting Principal Second Violin*
Heather Braun-Bakken
Rohan Gregory
Jodi Hagen
Hikaru Yonezaki
Mitsuru Yonezaki

Viola

David Feltner
Acting Principal
Don Krishnaswami

Cello

Brent Selby *Principal*
Melanie Dyball

Bass

Barry Boettger *Principal*

Flute/Piccolo

Linda Toote *Principal*

Oboe/English Horn

Nancy Dimock *Principal*

Clarinet

Jan Halloran *Principal*
Nicholas Brown

Bassoon

Rachel Juszczak
Acting Principal

Horn

Kevin Owen *Principal*
Dirk Hillyer

Trumpet

Terry Everson *Acting Principal*

Trombone

Hans Bohn
Acting Principal

Tuba

Taka Hagiwara
Acting Principal

Percussion/Timpani

Craig McNutt
Acting Principal

Keyboard

Brett Hodgdon▼
Brendon Shapiro▼

- Boston Lyric Opera Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artist
- ▼ Boston Lyric Opera Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artist Alum

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Alexandra Dietrich● *Assistant Stage Director*
Adrian Speth *Assistant Stage Manager*
Alycia Martin *Assistant Stage Manager*

MUSIC STAFF

William Manley *Orchestra Contractor*
& *Music Librarian*

The artists and stage managers employed on these productions are members of the American Guild of Musical Artists. All musicians are members of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada. BLO is a member of OPERA America, the national service organization for opera in the US and Canada.



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Michelle Johnson in rehearsal for BLO's *Aida* with the
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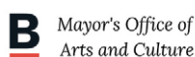
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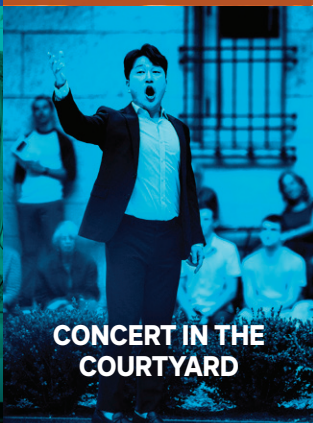
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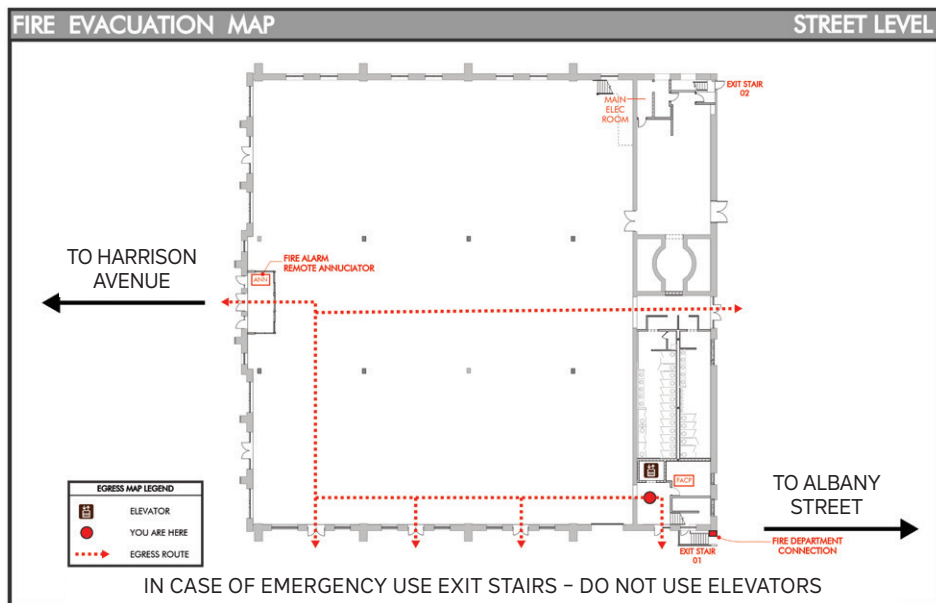


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