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## **One Month to Historic Performance of Opera in The Castle**

*Boston Lyric Opera presents new production of The Turn of the Screw February 3, 5, 6, 2010*

**Boston, MA** — Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) is one month away from opening its new Opera Annex production of Benjamin Britten's haunting classic, [\*The Turn of the Screw\*](#), at [The Castle at Boston Park Plaza Hotel & Towers](#). BLO's inaugural Opera Annex represents part of the Company's new artistic vision, and will be the first opera ever performed in the historic Castle since it was built as an armory in the late nineteenth century. The new production, which runs February 3, 5, and 6 at 7:30pm, welcomes internationally acclaimed soprano Rebecca Nash as Ms. Jessel in her American opera debut, and launches the 40<sup>th</sup> year in opera for the renowned mezzo-soprano, Joyce Castle, who will sing the role of Mrs. Grose.

"Boston Lyric Opera thanks the Boston Park Plaza Hotel & Towers for welcoming us into such an impressive space, and in doing so, for supporting our efforts to strengthen opera's presence in the Boston community." says Esther Nelson, BLO's General & Artistic Director. "We hope our Opera Annex productions attract new fans to opera and excite existing opera lovers about its presence in Boston."

Opera Annex is a new initiative developed by Ms. Nelson and her artistic and production team. It offers an opportunity to experience opera outside the traditional theatre environment by creating a production that reflects the unique characteristics of its particular performance space. The Castle's architectural style appropriately mirrors the setting of *The Turn of the Screw*, and will afford a unique and intimate connection between the audience, the singers, and the chamber orchestra. In addition, BLO will project a live video feed behind the singers of action in other areas of the Castle to offer an alternative perspective to the on-stage performance.

"The Boston Park Plaza Hotel & Towers is excited about this new opportunity and partnership with Boston Lyric Opera. We are looking forward to welcoming this prestigious production; this is a historic first for the Park Plaza Castle, a national historic landmark which opened its doors in 1891," notes Stuart Meyerson, General Manager of the Boston Park Plaza Hotel & Towers.

### **BLO's New Opera Annex production of Britten's *The Turn of the Screw***

**When:** February 3, 5, 6, 2010. Approximate length is two hours 30 minutes (includes one 20 minute intermission). Sung in English.

**Where:** The Castle at Boston Park Plaza & Towers, 130 Columbus Avenue, Boston, MA 02116

- Tickets:** Tickets are on sale now starting at \$39 through BLO's Audience Services. BLO subscribers save 15%. Group discounts also available. Purchase online at [blo.org](http://blo.org) or call Audience Services at 617.542.6772 Monday – Friday, 10am-5pm.
- What:** A Governess arrives at a lonely English country house to care for two parentless children, but there is something terribly wrong. Wire-taught tension mounts as she gradually senses the truth—Evil has corrupted the children. Britten's chamber opera promises to glue the audience to their seats through this devastating story with riveting music.
- Who:**
- Conductor**                    **Andrew Bisantz\***
- Former Resident Conductor of Florida Grand Opera where he conducted Bizet's *Carmen* for the company's historic final performances at Miami-Dade County Auditorium. Also opened 2009-10 Season conducting *Suor Angelica* and *Pagliacci*.
  - 2001-2004, Assistant Conductor at Glimmerglass Opera
- Stage Director**            **Sam Helfrich\***
- **Read an interview with Mr. Helfrich about BLO's Opera Annex production and more at [blo.org/2009-2010\\_turn\\_production.html](http://blo.org/2009-2010_turn_production.html)**
  - *Orphée* and *The Consul* for Glimmerglass Opera; *Der Freischütz*, Handel's *Semele*, *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* for Opera Boston; *Don Giovanni* and *Agrippina* for Boston Baroque; *L'elisir d'amore* and Cimarosa's *The Secret Marriage* for Berkshire Opera
- Set Designer**                **Andrew Lieberman\***
- Full-time faculty member at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts
  - Designed *Partenope* at English National Opera, winner of the 2009 Lawrence Olivier Award for Best New Opera Production; also Princess Grace, USA Award winner
  - Previous productions with Sam Helfrich include Glimmerglass's *Orphée* and *The Consul*
  - Upcoming projects include *Paradise Lost* at American Repertory Theater; *L'Etoile* at New York City Opera; and *Othello* at Shakespeare on the Sound
- Video Designer**            **Leah Gelpe\***
- Designs projections and sound for national and international live performances
  - Locally: *Judy Garland in Concert* (Boston Pops and touring); *Britannicus* and *Island of Slaves* (American Repertory Theatre)
  - Holds an MFA in film from Columbia University and was a 2005-2007 recipient of the NEA/TCG Career Development Program
- Costume Designer**        **Nancy Leary\***
- BU College of Fine Arts assistant professor of production and design
  - Elliot Norton Award for regional premier of *Permanent Collection*, and IRNE award for Costume Design for *Into The Woods* at New Repertory Theatre
  - Currently working on *Othello* for Actor's Shakespeare Project
  - Designed for Boston Musica Viva; North Shore Music Theatre; ART Institute; Chamber Repertory Theatre; Boston Theatre Works; Merrimack Repertory Theatre; Huntington Theatre Company; the Berkshire Theatre Festival; Opera Boston; Julliard Opera
- Lighting Designer**        **Aaron Black\***
- Currently Resident Lighting Designer for the Classical Theatre of Harlem, named by The Drama League as "one of the eight to Watch in America"
  - Drama Desk Award and Audelco Award Nominations
  - Opera work includes the Royal Opera House; Opera Montreal; Chicago Opera Theatre; Glimmerglass Opera; Spoleto Festival USA; Lyric Opera of Kansas City; Opera Boston; Opera Bilbao, Spain; Pittsburgh Opera; the Manhattan School of Music
  - Featured projects include the MTV Video Music Awards; the Country Music Awards; From the Top; the New York City 9/11 Commemorations; and extensive work with NBC

(in order of vocal appearance)

- The Prologue/Quint** **Vale Rideout\***
- Britten's War Requiem with New York Philharmonic & Lorin Maazel
  - Performance of Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* with Boston Baroque
  - Frank in the world premiere of *Elmer Gantry* with Nashville Opera
  - Performed Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with Lorin Maazel's Symphonica Toscanini in Rome and Brussels
- The Governess** **Emily Pulley\***
- Metropolitan Opera regular with roles including Marguerite in *Faust*; Nedda in *Pagliacci*; Blanche in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*; Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel*; and others
  - Covent Garden debut as Mimi in *La bohème*; New York City Opera debut as Lavinia Mannon in *Mourning Becomes Electra* for which she won the New York City Opera Richard F. Gold Debut Artist Award
  - Agathe in Opera Boston's 2008 production of *Der Freischütz*
- Flora** **Kathryn Skemp\***
- Solo appearances with the Boston Pops
  - Master's Degree from Boston University, where she had numerous performances in principal roles with the BU Opera Institute and with companies such as Chicago Opera Theater; Glimmerglass Opera; Aspen Opera Theater; and Utah Opera and Symphony
  - Marie in BLO's 2002 Opera for Young Audiences production of *Daughter of the Regiment*
- Miles** **Ryan Williams\*** (*Performances TBA*)
- 12 years old
  - Chorister at Trinity Church Boston
  - Solo performance in 2007 and 2009 Boston Civic Symphony Holiday Pops concerts;
  - Performed in Walnut Hill School ballets of *The Nutcracker*, *Coppelia*, and *Sleeping Beauty*
- Aidan Gent\*** (*Performances TBA*)
- 13 years old
  - Joined PALS Children's Chorus in the fifth grade
  - Through PALS performed with the Cantata Singers and the BSO, including portrayals of "Sem" in Britten's *Noye's Fludde* and "The Little Jew" in Britten's *Children's Crusade*
  - "Young John" in Hoiby's *Summer and Smoke* with the New England Conservatory Opera Company
- Mrs. Grose** **Joyce Castle\***
- **Read an interview with Ms. Castle about BLO's Opera Annex production and more at [blo.org/2009-2010\\_turn\\_production.html](http://blo.org/2009-2010_turn_production.html)**
  - Celebrating her 40<sup>th</sup> year in opera. 132-role repertoire.
  - Widow Begbick in Opera Boston's production of *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*
  - Performed the Mother in Menotti's *The Consul* with Berkshire Opera
- Miss Jessel** **Rebecca Nash\***
- United States opera debut
  - Received inaugural Dame Joan Sutherland Singing Award, (Australia's major singing prize), at the Australian National Academy of Music
  - Covent Garden debut as Barena in *Jenùfa* under Bernard Haitink; also appeared at Scottish Opera; Opera North (England); Welsh National Opera; the Glyndebourne Festival; Opera de Lyon; English National Opera; Opera Australia; and Cologne Opera

\*BLO debut

This production is made possible by the generous support of BLO's Vision Fund and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

BLO's new Opera Annex continues the Company's innovative 2009-2010 Season, which includes the North American premiere of Welsh National Opera's take on R. Strauss' comedy, [Ariadne auf Naxos](#) in March; a new BLO production of Mozart's dramatic [Idomeneo, re di Creta](#) in April; [Signature Series](#) events with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston that precede each opera; [free Opera Nights at the Boston Public Library](#), and much more. In February and March, BLO will present Rossini's [The Barber of Seville](#)

as its annual Opera for Young Audiences for 26,000 children throughout New England. For more information, please visit [blo.org](http://blo.org).

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Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) is New England's largest opera company. Founded in 1976, BLO is recognized for its artistically excellent productions of a diverse repertoire that entertain and inspire audiences and feature emerging operatic talent. BLO produces three mainstage productions at the Citi Performing Arts Center<sup>SM</sup> Shubert Theatre in Boston, an Opera Annex production in a found space, and a fully staged, one-hour English version of a popular Opera for Young Audiences throughout New England.

BLO's programs are funded, in part, by a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. [blo.org](http://blo.org)