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134 henry street • new york, ny • 10002

212 206 1450 • aleba@alebaco.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 22, 2025

More Information: berkshireoperafestival.org

PRESS CONTACTS

Aleba Gartner, 212/206-1450

aleba@alebaco.com

Tyson Traynor, 413/213-6641

marketing@berkshireoperafestival.org

"What Loy and his co-founder Brian Garman have pulled off in the Berkshires is some true wizardry."

— *Parterre Box*



Berkshire
opera festival

BERKSHIRE OPERA FESTIVAL

Brian Garman & Jonathon Loy, Co-Founders

announces its 10th Anniversary Season

The ambitious company, which has restored world-class, fully-staged opera to the Berkshires with savvy productions and superlative casts, mounts a new mainstage production of Verdi's masterpiece

LA TRAVIATA

August 23, 26, 29

Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Great Barrington, MA

Starring

VANESSA BECERRA as Violetta Valéry

JOSHUA BLUE as Alfredo Germont

DARREN DRONE as Giorgio Germont

Conducted by BRIAN GARMAN
Stage Direction by JONATHON LOY



Plus a spectacular

10th ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

August 14

Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Great Barrington, MA

BOF celebrates its past, present, and future with music from
beloved operas and new favorites

Featuring members of the cast of *La Traviata* and guest artists
with the Berkshire Opera Festival Orchestra and Chorus
under the musical direction of Brian Garman



And this spring, BOF presents a recital with rising stars:

YOUNG VERDI IN LOVE

April 27

St. James Place in Great Barrington, MA

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TICKETS ON SALE NOW:

berkshireoperafestival.org

BOF 2025 Calendar

April 27: *Young Verdi in Love* Recital at St. James Place in Great Barrington

March 2: Free Family Concert at Mahaiwe

June 1: Gala in Lenox

July 24: *La Traviata* Preview Talk at Mahaiwe

August 14: 10th Anniversary Concert at Mahaiwe

August 23: Pre-show lecture by Cori Ellison before *La Traviata* at Mahaiwe

August 23, 26, 29: *La Traviata* at Mahaiwe

Great Barrington, MA — The "innovative, clever and thoroughly professional" (*Bachtrack*) **BERKSHIRE OPERA FESTIVAL** (BOF) announces its tenth anniversary season in Great Barrington, MA, with presentations in spring and summer 2025. The only company of its kind in the Berkshire region, BOF produces opera at the highest level under the vision of esteemed co-founders **Brian Garman** (William E. Briggs Artistic Director) and **Jonathon Loy** (Director of Production).

The 2025 mainstage attraction is a new production of one of the most popular operas of all time: Giuseppe Verdi's masterpiece ***La Traviata***. BOF will bring it to the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center on **August 23, 26, and 29**. The Mahaiwe and BOF formalized a multi-year partnership last year, committing to bring world-class performing arts to the Berkshires.

Brian Garman says: "For the centerpiece of our celebratory 10th Anniversary Season, I'm thrilled to present Verdi's masterpiece of love and sacrifice, *La Traviata*. I know our audiences will be delighted by the beautiful and passionate singing of our internationally-renowned cast. And the celebration starts even earlier in August with a gala concert to mark our 10th Anniversary. It features many operatic favorites from Handel, Mozart, Puccini, and everything in between. This is a season not to be missed!"

BOF is also excited to produce a special **10th Anniversary Concert** at the Mahaiwe on **August 14**, featuring music from beloved operas and performances by top talent from previous and upcoming seasons along with members of the cast of *La Traviata*. On **April 27**, the recital ***Young Verdi in Love*** will showcase some of the brilliant young singers that BOF is known for tapping.

A combination of exceptional singers, a great orchestra, and arresting productions, all in a perfectly sized theater for unamplified voices (680 seats) and at affordable prices has led national opera critics to declare "destination" status on Berkshire Opera Festival. And as the local *Berkshire On Stage* writes: "No longer need we confine our opera-going to HD films—now we have the highest quality productions and performers in our own backyard."

"This festival is garnering a reputation as a showcase for promising young artists."

— **A.Z. Madonna, *The Boston Globe***

"BOF's productions rival those of much larger companies.

The BOF orchestra and chorus are always top notch, the cast first rate, the direction brilliant, the sets elegant, and the costumes gorgeous."

— **David Noel Edwards, *The Berkshire Edge***

The 2025 Season

LA TRAVIATA

berkshireoperafestival.org/traviata





*Top L-R: Vanessa Becerra, Joshua Blue, Darren Drone, Joanne Evans
Bottom L-R: Maximillian Jansen, John Cheek, Yazid Gray, Adam Partridge*

Music by **Giuseppe Verdi**

Libretto by **Francesco Maria Piave**

Saturday, August 23, 1pm

(Free pre-performance talk with dramaturg **Cori Ellison** at 12pm)

Tuesday, August 26, 7:30pm

Friday, August 29, 7:30pm

Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, 14 Castle Street, Great Barrington, MA

Approximate running time: 2 hours, 30 minutes including one intermission

Sung in Italian with projected English translations

Tickets start at \$20

CAST

Soprano **VANESSA BECERRA** - Violetta Valéry

Tenor **JOSHUA BLUE** - Alfredo Germont

Baritone **DARREN DRONE** - Giorgio Germont

Mezzo-soprano **JOANNE EVANS** - Flora Bervoix

Tenor **MAXIMILLIAN JANSEN** - Gastone

Bass-baritone **JOHN CHEEK** - Doctor Grenvil

Baritone **YAZID GRAY** - Baron Douphol

Baritone **ADAM PARTRIDGE** - The Marquis of Obigny

and featuring the

BERKSHIRE OPERA FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor **BRIAN GARMAN**

Stage Director **JONATHON LOY**

Scenic Designer **HANNAH POSTLETHWAITE**
Costume Designer **BROOKE STANTON**
Lighting Designer **ALEX JAINCHILL**
Hair and Make-up Designer **BECKIE KRAVETZ**
Choreographer **SARA ERDE**
Assistant Conductor and Chorus Master **LUCA ANTONUCCI**
Principal Coach and Rehearsal Pianist **TRAVIS BLOOM**
Musical Preparation **DAKOTA PEREZ**
Supertitles Author **CORI ELLISON**
Production Stage Manager **CINDY KNIGHT**

On the BOF mainstage this anniversary year is a new production of **Giuseppe Verdi's *LA TRAVIATA***, the timeless tale of love and sacrifice that has become one of the most beloved operas of all time. Violetta lives a life of decadence and grandeur until she finds true love for the first time with Alfredo. They leave high society for a life in the countryside together, but when fate intervenes, Violetta must make an agonizing choice. Verdi's exquisite melodies and rousing choruses are a perfect accompaniment for this doomed romance.

Stage Director and BOF Co-Founder **Jonathon Loy** says: "This season will be filled with heightened emotions, not only because we are tackling one of the most popular and tragic operas in the repertoire, *La Traviata*, but that it coincides with BOF's 10th anniversary. This is a milestone that calls for celebration, and celebrate we will."

Three performances take place at the **Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center in Great Barrington**. Playing Violetta Valéry is soprano **Vanessa Becerra**, making her BOF debut. Becerra has been praised for her "bold and bright" singing (*Opera News*), "full, beautifully focused" instrument (*Wall Street Journal*), and "charismatic and eloquent" presence (*San Francisco Chronicle*), and she sings with the Chicago Lyric Opera and Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center as well as BOF this season. Opposite Becerra is tenor **Joshua Blue** as Alfredo Germont. Blue returns to BOF after a thrilling performance in the company's 2022 production of *Don Giovanni*. In addition to BOF, Blue has performed with the English National Opera, Metropolitan Opera, and Opera Philadelphia. In the role of Giorgio Germont is **Darren Drone**, who has been described as having "a gorgeously warm tone and deep resonance" (*Opera News*). Drone has sung with the Metropolitan Opera, Cincinnati Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago.

"Energetic maestro Brian Garman wrung every last magnificent, sensuous drop out of a superb orchestra from start to finish."

"Electrifying is an apt word for the dynamic, intentional staging from director and co-founder Jonathon Loy."

— **Quotes from Evan Berkowitz in *The Berkshire Eagle***

10th ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

Celebrating BOF's Past, Present, and Future

berkshireoperafestival.org/10ac



Moments from BOF's first decade

Thursday, August 14, 7:30PM

Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, 14 Castle Street, Great Barrington, MA

1 hour, 30 minutes (no intermission)

Tickets start at \$20

Berkshire Opera Festival invites all to come celebrate its 10th anniversary with a festive concert on the stage of the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center. This exciting evening will showcase a wide variety of music from beloved operas alongside other selections that are sure to become new favorites. Joined by esteemed artists from previous and upcoming seasons, the internationally renowned cast of *La Traviata* will thrill with their voices and passion. These artists will be joined as always by the talented musicians of the **Berkshire**

Opera Festival Orchestra and Chorus, all under the musical direction of Artistic Director and Co-Founder **Brian Garman**.

YOUNG VERDI IN LOVE

A recital featuring up-and-coming opera stars

berkshireoperafestival.org/yvil





L-R: Kathleen O'Mara, Lawrence Barasa, Alan Williams, Francesco Barfoed

Sunday, April 27, 2:00 PM

Saint James Place, 352 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA

2 hours (including one intermission)

Tickets start at \$20

Giuseppe Verdi, the composer of *La Traviata*, was a man of incredible passion and creativity who transformed the world of Italian opera. And he did it while writing some of the world's most captivating and beautiful music. The recital ***Young Verdi in Love*** will showcase some of opera's up-and-coming stars, along with BOF's Artistic Director and Co-Founder Brian Garman, as they take listeners on a tour of the many facets of love through Verdi's music.

The performers include soprano [Kathleen O'Mara](#), tenor [Lawrence Barasa](#), bass-baritone **Alan Williams**, and pianist [Francesco Barfoed](#).

Berkshire Opera Festival

berkshireoperafestival.org

Berkshire Opera Festival (BOF) is a fully-producing summer festival founded by Jonathon Loy and Brian Garman which presented its first season in 2016. The mission of Berkshire Opera Festival is to entertain and enrich the lives of people of all ages and backgrounds throughout the Berkshire region by providing accessible and affordable performances of a broad range of operas with the highest artistic standards. Each summer, BOF presents musically and dramatically compelling operatic productions, in addition to recitals and other related musical events. Recent productions include Gounod's *Faust*, Puccini's *La Bohème*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Jake Heggie's *Three Decembers*, Verdi's *Falstaff*, Tom Cipullo's *Glory Denied*, Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Verdi's *Rigoletto*, and Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*.

Critical Acclaim for BOF

THE NEW YORK TIMES

"One of those productions that change the way you think about things."

THE BOSTON GLOBE

"A fresh approach to opera in the Berkshires."

OPERA MAGAZINE

"BOF, created by Loy and Garman in 2016, has consistently risen to the challenge of competing with the Boston Symphony's summer home of Tanglewood on a musical level."

OPERA WIRE

"The festival, not far from the historic site of Tanglewood, has gained a reputation for exciting and powerful productions. It is also known for spotting rising talent poised to reach an ever wider audience around the globe."

OPERA NEWS

"The strong, vivid effort drew a justified ovation from the crowd."

WQXR

"Since its creation by conductor Brian Garman and stage director Jonathon Loy, Berkshire Opera Festival has established itself as an important opera company."

THE NEW YORK TIMES

"This August I discovered another reason to return to Western Massachusetts: the Berkshire Opera Festival, which has struck me with awe."

SEEN AND HEARD INTERNATIONAL

"Since 2016, BOF has brightened the last days of summer with exceptional productions of operas both old and new."

PARTERRE BOX

"Tanglewood may bring the classical music crowd to Lenox, but for opera, it's all about neighboring Pittsfield, Mass. That's where Berkshire Opera Festival has been slowly making a name for itself at the Colonial Theatre, crafting sleeper hit productions for an ebullient crowd of local buffs, while drawing increasingly big-name artists to the Berkshires."

BROADWAY WORLD

"It was gratifying to find such a highly professional performance far from the madding crowd."

BOSTON MUSICAL INTELLIGENCER

"It would be hard to imagine a better cast of singers, both for their vocal abilities and their acting."

BERKSHIRE EAGLE

"Loy and Garman have demonstrated they have the commitment, skill and now proven experience to lead Berkshire Opera Festival on a long and satisfying journey."

BERKSHIRE EDGE

"Brian Garman conducted his 33-piece orchestra with all the detail and flair of a Metropolitan Opera orchestra."

BERKSHIRE ON STAGE

"Who would have believed that here in the Berkshires we would have our own opera festival showcasing talent from all over the world, including the MET and Italy's La Scala?"

BERKSHIRE REVIEW FOR THE ARTS

"The Berkshire Opera Festival has made itself indispensable."

BERKSHIRE RECORD

"The sold out house would not let them go.
I have never seen or heard such a reception for an opera performance."

PIONEER VALLEY RADIO

"Live opera, classical or contemporary, is a rarity around these parts,
but Berkshire Opera Festival is changing that."

LA SCENA MUSICALE

"The Berkshire Opera Festival has again mounted an important and challenging operatic masterpiece with gorgeous resourcefulness, canny stage sense, impeccable musicality and a world-class performing ensemble."

For further information, press tickets, photos, and to arrange interviews,
please contact Aleba & Co. at 212/206-1450 or aleba@alebaco.com.



PR for musical trailblazers



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