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134 henry street • new york, ny • 10002

212 206 1450 • aleba@alebaco.com

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More Information: berkshireoperafestival.org

PRESS CONTACTS

Aleba Gartner, 212/206-1450

aleba@alebaco.com

Tyson Traynor, 413/213-6641

marketing@berkshireoperafestival.org

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

— A.Z. Madonna, *The Boston Globe* 7/12/24



Berkshire
opera festival

BERKSHIRE OPERA FESTIVAL

Brian Garman & Jonathon Loy, Co-Founders

BOF has restored world-class, fully-staged opera to the Berkshires
with savvy productions and superlative casts.

This summer's mainstage opera is a reimagined French classic:

FAUST

August 24 at 1PM

August 27 at 7:30PM

August 30 at 7:30 PM

This new production of Gounod's timeless masterpiece
about a man who sells his soul to the devil to be young again
launches a multi-year partnership with the

Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center in Great Barrington, MA

Conducted by **Brian Garman**

Stage Direction by **Jonathon Loy**

And featuring the BOF debut of each artist in the exciting cast:

Duke Kim

Raquel González

Justin Hopkins

Jarrett Porter

Sun-Ly Pierce

Abbegael Greene

Kyle Dunn

TICKETS

COMING SUMMER 2025:

LA TRAVIATA

August 23, 26, 29





*Top L-R: Duke Kim, Raquel González, Justin Hopkins, Jarrett Porter
Bottom L-R: Sun-Ly Pierce, Abbegael Greene, Kyle Dunn*

Great Barrington, MA — On the Berkshire Opera Festival mainstage this year is a new production of **Charles Gounod's *FAUST***, the story of tragedy and redemption that stands at the summit of French romantic opera. Surging with memorable and timeless music, it has remained one of the world's most popular operas ever since its premiere and is considered Gounod's masterpiece. Based on Goethe's play, the story introduces the original "Faustian bargain"—old Dr. Faust sells his soul to the devil to be young again—but his decision has devastating consequences.

Conductor and Berkshire Opera Festival Co-Founder **Brian Garman** says, “BOF enters the realm of French grand opera for the first time with these performances of *Faust*. We’re thrilled to be able to do it with the remarkable talents of this internationally-acclaimed cast as we begin our residency at the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center.”

Of BOF's new production, Stage Director and BOF Co-Founder **Jonathon Loy** says: “I’m very excited to produce *Faust* this summer. Gounod’s romantic music is exquisite, and everyone will be familiar with the tale of the old man, Dr. Faust, who sells his soul to the devil, for a chance to be young and fall in love, just one more time. You won’t be surprised that this deal does not work out so well for the mortal parties involved.”

Three performances of *Faust* take place at **Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center in Great Barrington**, which will be BOF's home for the next several seasons. The organizations have a shared aspiration to bring world-class performing arts to the Berkshires and to formalize that connection through this multi-year commitment.

All artists in the esteemed *Faust* cast are making their BOF debut. In the title role is tenor **Duke Kim**, 2021 winner of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition. Kim also performed with Seattle Opera (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*) and

Pittsburgh Opera (*La Traviata*) this year, following Glimmerglass last summer (*Roméo et Juliette*). In the role of Marguerite is **Raquel González**, whom *Opera News* called a “true artist,” and is a returning member of the Metropolitan Opera's roster. She also sang with Houston Grand Opera (*Madama Butterfly*) this season, and previously Lyric Opera of Chicago and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Méphistophélès will be played by **Justin Hopkins**, whose bass-baritone was described by the *Los Angeles Times* as “beautifully focused.” His recent engagements include La Monnaie, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Bard Music Festival, and Austin Lyric Opera. **Jarrett Porter**, described by *Opera News* as “a supple, vibrant lyric baritone” and who will perform in five operas at Oper Frankfurt this year, will play Valentin. In the role of Siébel is **Sun-Ly Pierce**, who recently wowed audiences and critics in *Rodelinda* at Hudson Hall. Pierce has been praised by *Opera News* for her “lush, flexible mezzo-soprano,” and this season she also starred in productions at Houston Grand Opera (Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*), Des Moines Metro Opera (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), and made her Metropolitan Opera debut in *La Rondine*. In the role of Marthe Schwerlein is mezzo-soprano **Abbegael Greene**, who received a Master's degree in voice performance from Bard College Conservatory. **Kyle Dunn**, 2024 Apprentice Artist at Sarasota Opera and a graduate of Peabody Institute, sings Wagner.

BOF is pleased to announce the naming of its artistic directorship for **William E. Briggs**, in honor of his longstanding and transformative support of Berkshire Opera Festival. Briggs, along with partner Donald Usher, has provided both financial and in-kind backing through the years that has been immensely beneficial to the company's operations. Brian Garman, BOF's William E. Briggs Artistic Director and Co-Founder, remarked, “We're so very pleased to name this position for Bill Briggs, whose support has been absolutely critical to BOF's success over the past decade. I am deeply humbled by his generosity, and delighted to count him and Don as friends.” In response to this naming, Mr. Briggs commented, “I was intrigued by the idea of bringing opera back to the Berkshires, and very eager to support the vision of these two young entrepreneurs [Garman and co-founder Jonathon Loy]. As BOF continues to expand its programming to include more productions, educational initiatives, and community outreach, my hope is that many others will join me in financially supporting this exceptional organization.”

Berkshire Opera Festival looks forward to its **10th anniversary season in 2025**, when the mainstage production will be Verdi's magnificent *La Traviata*, starring **Vanessa Becerra, Joshua Blue, and Darren Drone**. Performances will take place **August 23, 26, and 29** at the **Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center**.

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

The orchestra under co-founder Brian Garman was lively and expert.”

— Evan Berkowitz, *The Berkshire Eagle*

FAUST

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Music by **Charles Gounod**

Libretto by **Jules Barbier** and **Michel Carré**

Saturday, August 24, 1pm

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

Tuesday, August 27, 7:30pm

Friday, August 30, 7:30pm

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

Approximate running time: 2 hours, 45 minutes including one intermission

Sung in French with projected English translations

Tickets start at \$20

CAST

Tenor **DUKE KIM** - Faust

Soprano **RAQUEL GONZÁLEZ** - Marguerite

Bass-baritone **JUSTIN HOPKINS** - Méphistophélès

Baritone **JARRETT PORTER** - Valentin

Mezzo-soprano **SUN-LY PIERCE** - Siébel

Mezzo-soprano **ABBEGAEL GREENE** - Marthe Schwerlein

Baritone **KYLE DUNN** - Wagner

and featuring the

BERKSHIRE OPERA FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor **BRIAN GARMAN**

Stage Director **JONATHON LOY**

Scenic Designer **STEPHEN DOBAY**

Costume Designer **BROOKE STANTON**

Lighting Designer **ALEX JAINCHILL**

Hair and Make-up Designer **BECKIE KRAVETZ**

Choreographer **ANDREA BEASOM**

Assistant Conductor and Chorus Master **GEOFFREY LARSON**

Principal Coach and Rehearsal Pianist **TRAVIS BLOOM**

Supertitles Author **CORI ELLISON**

Production Stage Manager **CINDY KNIGHT**

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."

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

"Electrifying is an apt word for the dynamic, intentional staging from director and co-founder Jonathon Loy...
The orchestra under co-founder Brian Garman was lively and expert."

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."

Berkshire Opera Festival

berkshireoperafestival.org



Berkshire Opera Festival Co-Founders, William E. Briggs Artistic Director Brian Garman and Interim Executive Director and Director of Production Jonathon Loy

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 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*, Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, and a NYC workshop performance of Anthony Davis's new opera *The Reef*.

Garman and Loy have been friends for over 20 years since their early career days at Pittsburgh Opera, with combined experience at the Metropolitan Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Seattle Opera, and New York City Opera. Loy has deep family ties in the Berkshires, and the Iowa-born Garman credits Loy for convincing him to take root in the bucolic Berkshires, finding the area revelatory in its beauty and depth of culture.

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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