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Boston Symphony Orchestra:
Andris Nelsons’ Inaugural Concert Featuring
The Conductor’s First Concert as BSO Music Director
Airs on THIRTEEN’s Great Performances
Friday, May 29 at 9 p.m. on PBS

Soprano Kristine Opolais and tenor Jonas Kaufmann join Nelsons for an eclectic program of operatic and orchestral masterworks

Last September’s gala event celebrating the start of BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons’ tenure with the orchestra features two of the conductor’s close colleagues: his wife, the acclaimed Latvian soprano Kristine Opolais, and the outstanding German tenor Jonas Kaufmann, each singing selections from the Wagnerian and Italian verismo repertoires. The concert opens fittingly with Wagner’s Tannhäuser Overture—the work that first inspired a five-year-old Nelsons to a life in music—and closes with Respighi’s spectacular orchestral showcase, Pines of Rome.

The Great Performances special, Boston Symphony Orchestra: Andris Nelsons’ Inaugural Concert, airs Friday, May 29 at 9 p.m. on PBS. (Check local listings.) The program selections shine a special focus on this exciting new collaboration between conductor and orchestra, and also include Wagner’s Prelude and Liebestod from Tristan und Isolde, with Opolais; and the Intermezzo from Mascagni’s Cavalleria rusticana. Kaufmann and Opolais—both frequent Nelsons collaborators—join in a performance of the famous duet “Tu, tu, amore? Tu?” from Puccini’s Manon Lescaut. Each singer takes center stage for solo arias, with Opolais singing “Un bel di” from Puccini’s Madama Butterfly. When Kaufmann returns to the stage he sings two
beloved tenor selections: the title character’s magical third-act narrative, “In fernem Land,” from Wagner’s *Lohengrin*, and the dramatic aria, “Mamma, quel vino è generoso,” from Mascagni’s *Cavalleria rusticana*.

Nelsons made his Boston Symphony debut in 2011, conducting Mahler’s Symphony No. 9 at Carnegie Hall. He made his Tanglewood debut in 2012, leading both the BSO and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra as part of Tanglewood’s 75th Anniversary Gala (a concert subsequently broadcast on *Great Performances*). His appointment as the BSO’s music director cements his reputation as one of the most renowned conductors on the international scene today, a distinguished name on both the opera and concert podiums. He is the fifteenth music director in the history of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, following such greats as Serge Koussevitzky, Charles Munch, Erich Leinsdorf, William Steinberg, Seiji Ozawa, and James Levine.

Over the next few seasons Maestro Nelsons will continue collaborations with the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, the Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Philharmonia Orchestra. He is a regular guest at the Royal Opera House-Covent Garden, the Vienna State Opera, and New York’s Metropolitan Opera.

Born in Riga in 1978 into a family of musicians, Andris Nelsons began his career as a trumpeter in the Latvian National Opera Orchestra before studying conducting. He married fellow Latvian Opolais in 2011 at the Latvian National Opera when Nelsons was principal conductor, and she a member of the company, and they have a daughter.

The full musical program runs as follows:

**WAGNER**
Overture to Tannhäuser  
"In fernem Land" from Lohengrin, Act III – Kaufmann
Prelude and Liebestod from Tristan und Isolde – Opolais
"Mamma, quel vino è generoso" from Cavalleria rusticana, Act II – Kaufmann
"Un bel di" from Madama Butterfly – Opolais
Intermezzo from Cavalleria rusticana
"Tu, tu, amore? Tu?" from Manon Lescaut, Act II – Opolais, Kaufmann
Act I finale La Boheme (encore) – Opolais, Kaufmann

**PUCCINI**
Respighi: Pines of Rome

**MASCAGNI**
Intermezzo from Cavalleria rusticana

Boston Symphony Orchestra: Andris Nelsons’ Inaugural Concert was directed by Bill Cosel. For *Great Performances*, John Walker is producer. Bill O’Donnell is series producer and David Horn is executive producer.

*Great Performances* is funded by the Irene Diamond Fund, the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Arts Fund, The Agnes Varis Trust, the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust, The Starr Foundation, The Kate W. Cassidy Foundation, the Philip and Janice Levin Foundation, and PBS.

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