FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
DATE: May 2, 2016

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND MUSIC DIRECTOR ANDRIS NELSONS TO BEGIN 8-CITY, 9-CONCERT TOUR TO EUROPE, MAY 3-12, WITH PERFORMANCE IN FRANKFURT’S ALTE OPER ON TUESDAY, MAY 3

TOUR TO FEATURE THE BSO IN DEBUT PERFORMANCES IN LEIPZIG, DRESDEN, AND LUXEMBOURG, AND LONG-AWAITED RETURNS TO FRANKFURT, MUNICH, AND VIENNA

ANDRIS NELSONS TO LEAD BSO IN FRANKFURT’S ALTE OPER (5/3), ESSEN’S PHILHARMONIE (5/4), MUNICH’S GASTEIG PHILHARMONIE (5/8), VIENNA’S MUSIKVEREIN (5/9&10), AND HAMBURG’S LAEISZHALLE (5/11), AS WELL AS DEBUT APPEARANCES IN LEIPZIG’S GEWANDHAUS (5/5), DRESDEN’S FRAUENKIRCHE (5/6), AND LUXEMBOURG’S PHILHARMONIE (5/12)

MR. NELSONS TO LEAD BSO IN TWO PROGRAMS: MAHLER’S NINTH SYMPHONY (5/3, 5/5, 5/6, 5/10, 5/11, 5/12), AND RACHMANINOFF’S ZDES’ KHOROSHO AND TCHAIKOVSKY’S LETTER SCENE FROM EUGENE ONEGIN WITH RENOWNED SOPRANO KRISTINE OPOLAIS, PLUS SHOSTAKOVICH’S SUITE FROM THE INCIDENTAL MUSIC TO HAMLET, DEBUSSY’S LA MER, AND RAVEL’S LA VALSE (5/4, 5/8, 5/9); CELLIST JAN VOGLER TO OPEN BSO PERFORMANCE OF MAHLER 9 IN DRESDEN WITH PERFORMANCE OF BRUCH’S KOL NIDREI, FOR CELLO AND ORCHESTRA (5/6)

BSO EMBARKS ON EUROPEAN TOUR ON THE HEELS OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF CONTRACT EXTENSION WITH DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON: NEW CONTRACT TO EXTEND BEYOND ORIGINAL AGREEMENT TO RECORD SHOSTAKOVICH’S SYMPHONIES 5-10; PROJECT NOW ALSO TO INCLUDE COMPLETE CANON OF COMPOSER’S SYMPHONIES, PLUS LADY MACBETH OF MTSENSK

CONCERTGOERS AT VENUES WHERE THE BSO WILL PERFORM IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA WILL HAVE EXCLUSIVE ADVANCE ACCESS TO THE ORCHESTRA’S NEW DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON RELEASE—
Andris Nelsons and the Boston Symphony Orchestra will return to Europe for a 9-concert, 8-city European tour, May 3-12, to include stops in major musical cities in Austria, Germany, and Luxembourg, following their highly acclaimed first tour together in eight European cities this past August-September. The BSO’s 2016 European tour will feature the orchestra in performances at Frankfurt’s Alte Oper (5/3), Essen’s Philharmonie (5/4), Leipzig’s Gewandhaus (5/5), Dresden’s Frauenkirche (5/6), Munich’s Gasteig Philharmonie (5/8), Vienna’s Musikverein (5/9&10), Hamburg’s Laeiszhalle (5/11), and Luxembourg’s Philharmonie (5/12). The tour marks the orchestra’s debut performances in Leipzig, Dresden, and Luxembourg, as well as the BSO’s first returns to Frankfurt since September 1991, Vienna and Munich since March 1998, and Essen and Hamburg since August 2007.

DETAILS OF UPCOMING BSO TOUR TO EUROPE WITH ANDRIS NELSONS
Renowned soprano Kristine Opolais will join the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Andris Nelsons for concerts in Essen (5/4), Munich (5/8), and Vienna (5/9), performing the Letter Scene from Tchaikovsky’s Eugene Onegin and Rachmaninoff’s Zdes’ khorosho (How fair this place). These three concerts will also feature Mr. Nelsons leading the BSO in Shostakovich’s Suite from the incidental music to Hamlet, Debussy’s La Mer, and Ravel’s La Valse. In Frankfurt (5/3), Leipzig (5/5), Dresden (5/6), Vienna (5/10), Hamburg (5/11), and Luxembourg (5/12), the orchestra will perform Mahler’s Symphony No. 9, which Mr. Nelsons conducted in his BSO debut in 2011 at Carnegie Hall. The Dresden performance will also feature acclaimed cellist Jan Vogler in Bruch’s Kol Nidrei (complete tour concert schedule available here and at end of this release).

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON TO RELEASE SECOND SHOSTAKOVICH ALBUM BY BSO/ANDRIS NELSONS AT TOUR VENUES IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA PRIOR TO INTERNATIONAL RELEASE ON MAY 27
The Boston Symphony Orchestra and Andris Nelsons embark on their second European tour on the heels of an announcement of a contract extension with Deutsche Grammophon. The new contract, announced today, Monday, May 2, extends beyond the original agreement to record Shostakovich’s Symphonies 5-10, and now includes the composer’s complete symphonic canon, plus Lady MacBeth of Mtsensk. Further details about the contract announcement and details of upcoming release of Symphonies 5, 8, and 9 is available here.

In connection with the upcoming BSO tour, exclusive advance access to the orchestra’s latest Deutsche Grammophone release will be offered to concertgoers at tour venues in Germany and Austria, prior to the international release on May 27. This new double-length album features Shostakovich’s Symphonies Nos. 5, 8, and 9, along with the incidental music from Hamlet, and it comes following the BSO’s and Mr. Nelsons’ recent Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance for their recording of Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 10. It is the second in a series of three releases under the moniker Shostakovich Under Stalin’s Shadow, with a special focus on the music Shostakovich composed during the years of his difficult relationship with Joseph Stalin and the Soviet regime. The third and last installment, also a double-length album, will feature Shostakovich’s Sixth and Seventh Symphonies and is scheduled for release in summer 2017 (complete information about the Deutsche Grammophon recordings available here).
QUOTE FROM ANDRIS NELSONS, BSO MUSIC DIRECTOR

“As we embark on our second tour together to Europe, it is an honor for me to lead the Boston Symphony Orchestra in its first-ever performances in the extremely cultured cities of Leipzig, Dresden, and Luxembourg, and in its long-awaited return to Frankfurt, Essen, Hamburg, Munich and particularly to the extraordinary Musikverein in Vienna,” said BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons.

“With performances of Mahler’s Ninth Symphony—the first piece I ever conducted with the BSO that started me on the wonderful journey of where I am today—and the compelling Letter Scene from Tchaikovsky’s Eugene Onegin, with the exceptional artistry of Kristine Opolais—as well as works by Shostakovich, Rachmaninoff, Debussy, and Ravel—the repertoire, with which the BSO have such a strong tradition, chosen for this tour is sure to give the fantastic audiences of these great musical capitals a glimpse into the BSO’s unique spectrum of musical gifts that inspire all of us that know and love the orchestra.”

Andris Nelsons and the Boston Symphony Orchestra

In 2015-16, his second season as the Boston Symphony Orchestra Music Director, Andris Nelsons leads the BSO in thirteen wide-ranging programs, three of them being repeated at Carnegie Hall in New York. This past August, Maestro Nelsons’ contract as music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra was extended through the 2021-22 season (additional information can be found here). Highlights of this season’s BSO programs include concert performances of Strauss’s Elektra; three weeks marking the 400th anniversary of the death of Shakespeare; new works by Hans Abrahamsen, Sebastian Currier, and George Tsontakis; and the continuation of the orchestra’s multi-year Shostakovich recordings project in collaboration with Deutsche Grammophon, “Shostakovich Under Stalin’s Shadow,” to be drawn from live performances at Symphony Hall of Shostakovich’s symphonies 5 through 10, the Passacaglia from his opera Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk, and selections from Shostakovich’s incidental music to Hamlet and King Lear, all composed during the period the composer labored under the life-threatening shadow of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin. The BSO’s and Nelsons’ first recording in this series—Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 10—won the 2015 Grammy for Best Orchestral Performance. This summer, Mr. Nelsons will lead the BSO in four programs at Tanglewood; he will also lead the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra and pianist Paul Lewis in an all-Brahms program for the Leonard Bernstein Memorial Concert on July 31 (more details at tanglewood.org). The Boston Symphony Orchestra’s 2016-17 season will be announced on March 11; for more details, visit bso.org.

Mr. Nelsons, who formally holds the title Boston Symphony Orchestra Ray and Maria Stata Music Director, led the BSO in their highly acclaimed first tour together—a 12-concert, 8-city tour to major European capitals, including Berlin, Cologne, London, Milan, and Paris, as well as the Lucerne, Salzburg, and Grafenegg festivals; they return to Europe for a 9-concert, 8-city European tour, May 3-12, featuring stops in major musical cities in Austria, Germany, and Luxembourg, including debut performances in Leipzig, Dresden, and Luxembourg.

The BSO and Nelsons have released many recordings on a variety of traditional and digital platforms. Mr. Nelsons and the BSO have partnered with Deutsche Grammophon in a collaboration for a series of live recordings of works by Shostakovich. Launched in 2015 with a project entitled Shostakovich Under Stalin’s Shadow, the recordings focus on works composed during the period of Shostakovich’s difficult relationship with Stalin and the Soviet regime—starting with his fall from favor in the mid-1930s and the composition and highly acclaimed premiere of his Fifth Symphony, and through the premiere of the composer’s Tenth Symphony. Summer 2015 marked the release of the first disc, combining the Passacaglia from Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk and Symphony No. 10, which, as referred to above, won the
2015 Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance. Mr. Nelsons and the BSO will release their second Shostakovich album with symphonies No. 5, 8, and 9 on May 27. The Boston Symphony Orchestra and Andris Nelsons entered into a new partnership to create Classical Live, a unique initiative that offers a new paradigm for the distribution of live recordings of classical music offered only on Google Play Music, with several recordings already available at music.google.com or classical-live.com. The Boston Symphony Orchestra released its first CD and digital download with Music Director Andris Nelsons on BSO Classics, available at BSO.org, in early December 2014; it features Wagner’s Tannhäuser Overture—the first piece Mr. Nelsons conducted as BSO Music Director—and Sibelius’s Symphony No. 2, recorded at live at Symphony Hall during Andris Nelsons’ first few programs as the BSO’s new music director.

When Mr. Nelsons took on the title of BSO Music Director on September 27, 2014, at age 35, he became the youngest conductor to hold that title with the orchestra in over 100 years. The fifteenth music director since the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s founding in 1881, Mr. Nelsons is also the first Latvian-born conductor to assume the post. Mr. Nelsons made his BSO debut at Carnegie Hall in March 2011 with Mahler’s Symphony No. 9. He made his Tanglewood debut in July 2012, leading both the BSO and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra as part of Tanglewood’s 75th Anniversary Gala (a concert available on DVD and Blu-ray, and telecast nationwide on PBS).

In his debut season, 2014-15, Andris Nelsons led the BSO in music that inspired and influenced his life as a musician, including music drawn from the great Slavic and Scandinavian traditions and some of his favorites from the core German repertoire; American and world premieres featuring composers both new and familiar to the BSO; and performances showcasing the talents of several of his favorite frequent collaborators. Andris Nelsons’ debut performance as BSO Music Director in September 2014 was taped for broadcast nationally and internationally through PBS’s Great Performances series—highlights of which included the overture to Wagner’s Tannhäuser, Wagner’s Prelude and Liebestod from Tristan und Isolde, featuring Kristine Opolais, “In fernem Land,” from Wagner’s Lohengrin, featuring Jonas Kaufmann; the famous duet “Tu, tu, amore? Tu?” from Puccini’s Manon Lescaut featuring both singers, and Respighi’s resplendent Pines of Rome. Among the highlights of the 2015 Tanglewood season, Andris Nelsons led the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra in a performance of Mahler’s Symphony No 8, "Symphony of a Thousand" in celebration of the prestigious summer music academy’s 75th anniversary at Tanglewood; the performance was telecast live to viewers in Boston’s Copley Square and is available for on demand viewing at streambso.org.

In the 2017-18 season, Mr. Nelsons becomes Gewandhauskapellmeister of the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig (GWO), in which capacity he will also bring the BSO and GWO together for a unique multi-dimensional alliance exploring historic connections between the two (for more details about the alliance, please click here). From 2008 to 2015, Andris Nelsons was critically acclaimed as music director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. In the 2015-16 season, he continues collaborations with the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Philharmonia Orchestra. He is a regular guest at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and Metropolitan Opera, and in summer 2016 returns to the Bayreuth Festival for a new production of Wagner’s Parsifal.

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 was principal conductor of the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie in Herford, Germany, from 2006 to 2009 and music director of the Latvian National Opera from 2003 to 2007. Andris Nelsons participated in a Google Talk, where he
discussed his role and responsibilities as a conductor and music director and his thoughts on the power of music and the important influence music can have in the community. Additional information about Andris Nelsons can be found at andrisnelsons.com and BSO.org. Andris Nelsons is on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/AndrisNelsonsOfficialPage and on Twitter at https://www.twitter.com/andris_nelsons. Details about Andris Nelsons’ activities with the Boston Symphony Orchestra are also available at BSO.org, one of the world’s largest and most-visited orchestral websites, receiving approximately 10 million visitors annually and generating over $111 million in revenue since its launch in 1996. BSO.org is also mobile-device compatible.

Kristine Opolais, soprano
Kristine Opolais is one of the most sought after sopranos on the international scene today, appearing at the Metropolitan Opera New York, Wiener Staatsoper, Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, Bayerische Staatsoper, Teatro alla Scala and Royal Opera House Covent Garden. She has worked with such conductors as Daniel Barenboim, Antonio Pappano, Daniel Harding, Louis Langrée, Andris Nelsons, Gianandrea Noseda, Marco Armiliato, Marc Minkowski, Fabio Luisi, Kirill Petrenko, Alain Altinoglu and Kazushi Ono.

In the 2015-16 season, Ms. Opolais continues her notable collaboration with the Metropolitan Opera, returning for an anticipated new production of Manon Lescaut with Ms. Opolais in the title role. Manon Lescaut has become a signature role for the soprano, following her 2014 appearances in two new productions of the opera, at Royal Opera House and Bayerische Staatsoper. In spring 2016 she also appears at the Metropolitan Opera as Cio-Cio San in Madama Butterfly; both this opera and Manon Lescaut will be broadcast to cinemas as part of the Met’s “Live in HD” series. Ms. Opolais has maintained a strong relationship with the Metropolitan Opera, since her 2013 debut there as Magda in La Rondine. In April 2014 she made Met history, when, within 18 hours, she made house debuts in two roles, giving an acclaimed, scheduled performance as Cio-Cio San in Madama Butterfly, then stepping in as Mimì for a matinee performance of La bohème the very next day—a performance broadcast to cinemas around the world.

Continuing her association with the Bayerische Staatsoper, she makes two role debuts there in 2015/16: as Margherita in Boito’s Mefistofele and as Rachel in Halévy’s La Juive. Since her 2010 Bayerische Staatsoperdebut, when she stepped in to sing the title role in Dvořák’s Rusalka, she has appeared there as Cio-Cio San, Amelia in Simon Boccanegra, Vitellia in La Clemenza di Tito, and Tatiana in Eugene Onegin. Her collaboration with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden(where she has particularly earned the accolade of “the leading Puccini Soprano of today” from The Telegraph), has featured the Puccini roles of Cio-Cio San, Floria Tosca, and Manon Lescaut. She has also appeared at Opernhaus Zürich in the title role of Jenůfa and recently made her house debut at Opéra National de Paris Bastille.

Recent concert performances have included appearances at the Salzburg Festival, Tanglewood, the BBC Proms, and with the Symphonie-orchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln, Tonhalle Orchester Zürich, Stockholm Philharmonic, and Filarmonicadella Scala. Highlights of 2015-16 include her debut with the Concertgebouw Orchestra under Semyon Bychkovand concerts with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Andris Nelsons on their 2016 European tour, to include her Musikverein debut.
Jan Vogler, cello
In his distinguished career Jan Vogler has performed with renowned conductors and internationally acclaimed orchestras around the world. His strong classical foundation has allowed him to push the boundaries of his sound, creating an ongoing dialogue with contemporary composers and performers. He regularly premieres new works, most recently compositions by celebrated composers Tigran Mansurian (with WDR Sinfonieorchester conducted by Semyon Bychkov), John Harbison (his Double Concerto, with violinist Mira Wang and the Boston Symphony Orchestra), Udo Zimmermann (Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra) and Wolfgang Rihm.

A prolific and multi-award-winning recording artist, Mr. Vogler records exclusively for Sony Classical. His newest CD, to be released in March 2016, features Tchaikovsky’s Rococo Variations, Sérénade mélancholique, and Meditation with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Andrés Orozco-Estrada. Other recent CDs include Concerti a Venezia with La Folia Baroque Orchestra, the Schumann album “Dichterliebe” with pianist Hélène Grimaud, and his critically acclaimed and award-winning recording of Bach’s Six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello (2012).

Highlights of the 2015-16 season include the world premiere of Wolfgang Rihm’s Duo Concerto with Mira Wang and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, as well as concert appearances with the Boston Symphony and Andris Nelsons, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra led by Alain Altinoglu, the Dresden Philharmonic with Juanjo Mena, the Singapore Symphony, Leipzig Radio Orchestra led by Kristjan Järvi, the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg with Ivor Bolton, and the Dresden Festival Orchestra, also with Ivor Bolton. The season also brings a German recital tour with pianist and frequent collaborator Martin Stadtfeld.

Jan Vogler has been Artistic Director of the Moritzburg Festival near Dresden since 2001, and Intendant of the Dresden Music Festival since October 2008. In 2006 he received the European Award for Culture, and in 2011 the Erich-Kästner Award for tolerance, humanity, and international understanding. For his recording of Bach’s Cello Suites, he was awarded the 2014 ECHO Klassik award as “Instrumentalist of the Year (cello).”

Jan Vogler plays the Stradivari “Ex Castelbarco/Fau” 1707 cello and splits his time between New York City, where he lives with his wife and two daughters, and Dresden, Germany.

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA TOURING HISTORY IN BRIEF
The Boston Symphony Orchestra’s upcoming tour in May 2016 will be the ensemble’s sixteenth tour to the major music capitals of Europe. The orchestra’s most recent European tour took place in summer 2015, under the direction of Andris Nelsons following his first BSO and Tanglewood seasons as music director, visiting London, Salzburg, Grafenegg, Lucerne, Milan, Paris, Cologne, and Berlin. In spring 2014, the BSO, under the direction of Charles Dutoit, toured in China – 35 years since the orchestra’s historic 1979 visit – and Tokyo, Japan. James Levine (BSO Music Director 2004-2011) led the BSO on a tour of European music festivals in summer 2007, and BSO Conductor Emeritus Bernard Haitink conducted the orchestra in a 5-country, 10-concert tour through Europe in 2001. For a complete history of the BSO, click here.

In addition to its performance series at Boston’s Symphony Hall, Tanglewood (the orchestra’s summer home in Lenox and Stockbridge, Mass.), and New York’s Carnegie Hall, the Boston Symphony Orchestra has regularly toured nationally and internationally since its first U.S. trans-continental trip to perform at
the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco, under the baton of Karl Muck (BSO Music Director 1906-08; 1912-18) in May 1915. As early as 1882, the orchestra traveled throughout New England, and in 1886 the orchestra expanded its touring to major East Coast cities. Having performed more than 5,100 concerts outside of Boston since 1881, the BSO has embarked on 25 international tours and 8 major domestic tours. The BSO has also been featured in more than 60 shorter domestic and Canadian tours, between 1889 and 1983, including appearances in such cities as Buffalo, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis, as well as Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Winnipeg, among others.

Charles Munch (BSO Music Director 1949-62) and special guest conductor Pierre Monteux (BSO Music Director 1919-1924) led the orchestra in its first international tour in May 1952, which included performances in Paris, The Hague, Amsterdam, Brussels, Frankfurt, Berlin, Strasbourg, Metz, Lyon, Bordeaux, and London; the tour was sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, who chose the BSO to represent the American symphonic tradition in Europe. In 1956, the orchestra returned to Europe, performing in 19 cities including historic concerts in the Soviet Union, making its mark as cultural ambassadors and becoming the first American orchestra to perform there. Two more continents were introduced to the BSO’s touring repertoire when Mr. Munch led the orchestra on an expansive 56-day tour to parts of Australia, New Zealand, and Asia in 1960.

Seiji Ozawa (BSO Music Director 1973-2002; BSO Music Director Laureate since 2002) played a major role in BSO touring, leading the ensemble on 15 of its 24 major international tours; he led the BSO in eight European tours, including a 9-concert, 5-city tour to London, Paris, Vienna, Munich, and Athens in 1998. Mr. Ozawa’s last overseas trip with the orchestra as its music director was a 5-concert tour to Paris and Cologne in 2000, which included a special performance at the foot of Paris’s Eiffel Tower in celebration of the new millennium. Mr. Ozawa also led the BSO on two major tours in celebration of the BSO’s centennial in 1981, including a U.S. tour in March 1981, which included 14 performances in New Jersey, New York, Chicago, Colorado, Utah, California, Arizona, Texas, South Carolina, and Washington, D.C. A world tour to Europe and Japan in celebration of the centennial took place in October and November 1981 and included performances in Osaka, Nagoya, Tokyo, Paris, Frankfurt, Berlin, Vienna, and London.

In 1979, the BSO and Seiji Ozawatraveled to Shanghai and Beijing, becoming the first western orchestra to visit the People’s Republic of China following the establishment of diplomatic relations. With Ozawa at the helm, the orchestra made frequent trips to Japan, including major tours in 1981, 1986, 1989, 1994, and 1999. As part of a tour celebrating Seiji Ozawa’s 25th anniversary season as BSO music director, Mr. Ozawa and the orchestra were to return to Beijing in 1999, but a bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia led to a cancellation of the trip; performances in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka, which were also part of that tour, went ahead as scheduled. Mr. Ozawa also led the Boston Symphony Orchestra's first tour to South America in 1992, with performances in São Paulo, Buenos Aires, and Caracas.

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Beginning its 136th season in September 2016, the Boston Symphony Orchestra gave its inaugural concert in 1881, realizing the dream of its founder, the Civil War veteran/businessman/philanthropist Henry Lee Higginson, who envisioned a great and permanent orchestra in his hometown of Boston. In 2014, the orchestra continued to build upon its storied history with the beginning of a new chapter as Andris Nelsons became the orchestra’s 15th music director at the start of the BSO’s 2014-15 season.
Today the BSO reaches millions of listeners, not only through its concert performances in Boston and at Tanglewood, but also via the internet, radio, television, educational programs, recordings, and tours. It commissions works from today’s most important composers; its summer season at Tanglewood in the Berkshire hills of Western Massachusetts is among the world’s most important music festivals; it helps develop future audiences through BSO Youth Concerts and educational outreach programs involving the entire Boston community; and, during the Tanglewood season, it operates the Tanglewood Music Center, one of the world’s most important training grounds for young professional-caliber musicians. The Boston Symphony Chamber Players, made up of BSO principals, are known worldwide, and the Boston Pops Orchestra—with its cabaret style festive atmosphere and food and drink served during the concerts—sets an international standard for performances of lighter music. The BSO’s winter season and the Boston Pops holiday and spring seasons take place in Boston’s Symphony Hall, widely acclaimed for its great acoustics and considered among the top concert halls in the world.

Launched in 1996, the BSO’s website, BSO.org, is the largest and most-visited orchestral website in the United States, receiving approximately 10 million visitors annually on its full site as well as its smart phone-/mobile device-friendly web format. The BSO is also on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and video content from the BSO is available on YouTube. An expansion of the BSO’s educational activities has also played a key role in strengthening the orchestra’s commitment to, and presence within, its surrounding communities. Through its Education and Community Engagement programs, the BSO provides individuals of all backgrounds the opportunity to develop and build relationships with the BSO and orchestral music. In addition, the BSO offers a variety of free educational programs at Symphony Hall and Tanglewood, as well as special initiatives aimed at attracting young audience members.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra gave its inaugural concert on October 22, 1881, under Georg Henschel, who remained as conductor until 1884. For nearly 20 years, BSO concerts were held in the old Boston Music Hall; Symphony Hall, one of the world’s most revered concert halls, opened on October 15, 1900. Henschel was succeeded by the German-born and -trained conductors Wilhelm Gericke, Arthur Nikisch, Emil Paur, and Max Fiedler, culminating in the appointment of the legendary Karl Muck, who served two tenures, 1906-08 and 1912-18. In 1915 the orchestra made its first transcontinental trip, playing 13 concerts at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. Henri Rabaud, engaged as conductor in 1918, was succeeded a year later by Pierre Monteux. These appointments marked the beginning of a French tradition maintained, even during the Russian-born Serge Koussevitzky’s tenure (1924-49), with the employment of many French-trained musicians.

It was in 1936 that Koussevitzky led the orchestra’s first concerts in the Berkshires; he and the players took up annual summer residence at Tanglewood a year later. Koussevitzky passionately shared Major Higginson’s dream of “a good honest school for musicians,” and in 1940 that dream was realized with the founding of the Berkshire Music Center (now called the Tanglewood Music Center).

Koussevitzky was succeeded in 1949 by Charles Munch, who continued supporting contemporary composers, introduced much French music to the repertoire, and led the BSO on its first international tours. In 1956, the BSO, under the direction of Charles Munch, was the first American orchestra to tour the Soviet Union. Erich Leinsdorf began his term as music director in 1962, to be followed in 1969 by William Steinberg. Seiji Ozawa became the BSO’s 13th music director in 1973. His historic 29-year tenure extended until 2002, when he was named Music Director Laureate. In 1979, the BSO, under the direction of Seiji Ozawa, was the first American orchestra to tour mainland China after the normalization of relations.
Bernard Haitink, named principal guest conductor in 1995 and Conductor Emeritus in 2004, has led the BSO in Boston, New York, at Tanglewood, and on tour in Europe, as well as recording with the orchestra. Previous principal guest conductors of the orchestra included Michael Tilson Thomas, from 1972 to 1974, and the late Sir Colin Davis, from 1972 to 1984.

The first American-born conductor to hold the position, James Levine was the BSO’s music director from 2004 to 2011. Levine led the orchestra in wide-ranging programs that included works newly commissioned for the orchestra’s 125th anniversary, particularly from significant American composers; issued a number of live concert performances on the orchestra’s own label, BSO Classics; taught at the Tanglewood Music Center; and in 2007 led the BSO in an acclaimed tour of European music festivals. In May 2013, a new chapter in the history of the Boston Symphony Orchestra was initiated when the internationally acclaimed young Latvian conductor Andris Nelsons was announced as the BSO’s next music director, a position he took up in the 2014-15 season, following a year as music director designate.

Today, the Boston Symphony Orchestra continues to fulfill and expand upon the vision of its founder Henry Lee Higginson, not only through its concert performances, educational offerings, and internet presence, but also through its expanding use of virtual and electronic media in a manner reflecting the BSO’s continuing awareness of today’s modern, ever-changing, 21st-century world. For further information about the Boston Symphony Orchestra's many activities, visit www.bso.org.

MEDIA OFFERINGS AT BSO.ORG
The Boston Symphony Orchestra’s extensive website, BSO.org, is one of the world’s largest and most-visited orchestral websites, receiving approximately 10 million visitors annually and generating over $111 million in revenue since its launch in 1996; BSO.org is also mobile-device compatible. The Boston Symphony Orchestra is on Facebook at Facebook.com/BostonSymphony on Twitter at Twitter.com/BostonSymphony, and on Google+ at Google.com/+bostonsymphony. Video content from the BSO is also available at YouTube.com/BostonSymphony. With the start of the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s 2015-16 season, the BSO launched a new, free app providing concertgoers with a new platform through which to interact with the Boston Symphony, Boston Pops, and Tanglewood. The app is available for download and installation on iPhone devices via the iTunes App Store, and on Android devices via Google Play.

RADIO BROADCASTS AND STREAMING
Concerts from the Shed are broadcast throughout the Tanglewood season in Boston on WCRB-99.5 FM, a service of WGBH, and WJMF 88.7 in Providence; in Albany on WAMC 90.3 FM and its network; in Connecticut on WMNR 88.1 FM, and in New Hampshire on WCNH 91.5 FM and WEVO 89.1 HD2. In addition, Sunday-afternoon concerts are broadcast on WFCR 88.5 in Amherst. Streaming audio of the broadcasts can also be accessed via the stations' websites at www.classicalwcrb.org; www.wamc.org; www.wmnr.org; www.nhpr.org; and www.wfcr.org. On-demand audio of concerts is available at www.bso.org and www.classicalwcrb.org.

Boston Symphony Orchestra Tour Itinerary in Europe, May 3-12, 2016

**Tuesday, May 3**
AlteOper
Frankfurt, Germany (first visit since Sept. 1991)

Andris Nelsons, conductor
MAHLER Symphony No. 9
Wednesday, May 4
Philharmonie Essen
Essen, Germany (first visit since Aug. 2007)
Andris Nelsons, conductor
Kristine Opolais, soprano
SHOSTAKOVICH Suite from the incidental music to Hamlet
RACHMANINOFF Zdes’ khorosho (How fair this place), Op. 21, No. 7
TCHAIKOVSKY Letter Scene from Eugene Onegin
DEBUSSY La Mer
RAVEL La Valse

Thursday, May 5
Gewandhaus Leipzig
Leipzig, Germany (BSO debut performance)
Andris Nelsons, conductor
MAHLER Symphony No. 9

Friday, May 6
Frauenkirche Dresden
Dresden, Germany (BSO debut performance)
Andris Nelsons, conductor
Jan Vogler, cello
BRUCH KolNidrei, Op. 47 for cello and orchestra
MAHLER Symphony No. 9

Sunday, May 8
GasteigPhilharmonieMünchen
Munich, Germany (first visit since March 1998)
Andris Nelsons, conductor
Kristine Opolais, soprano
SHOSTAKOVICH Suite from the incidental music to Hamlet
RACHMANINOFF Zdes’ khorosho (How fair this place), Op. 21, No. 7
TCHAIKOVSKY Letter Scene from Eugene Onegin
DEBUSSY La Mer
RAVEL La Valse

Monday, May 9
Wiener Musikverein
Vienna, Austria (first visit since March 1998)
Andris Nelsons, conductor
Kristine Opolais, soprano

Wednesday, May 11
Laeiszhalle
Hamburg, Germany (first visit since Aug. 2007)
Andris Nelsons, conductor
MAHLER Symphony No. 9

Thursday, May 12
Philharmonie Luxembourg
Luxembourg, Luxembourg (BSO debut performance)
Andris Nelsons, conductor
MAHLER Symphony No. 9
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