FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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ANDRIS NELSONS LEADS THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA IN ITS FIRST PERFORMANCES IN CANADA IN 21 YEARS ON MARCH 4 AND 5; MR. NELSONS ALSO MAKES HIS CANADIAN CONDUCTING DEBUT WITH THESE PERFORMANCES

BSO TO PERFORM AT MONTREAL’S MAISON SYMPHONIQUE ON SATURDAY, MARCH 4, AND AT TORONTO’S ROY THOMSON HALL ON SUNDAY, MARCH 5

ACCLAIMED PIANIST EMANUEL AX APPEARS AS FEATURED GUEST ON BOTH DATES PERFORMING WORKS OF MOZART (MONTREAL) AND BEETHOVEN (TORONTO); NELSONS ALSO LEADS ORCHESTRA IN BSO SIGNATURE WORK: BERLIOZ’S SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE


For the first time in 21 years, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Music Director Andris Nelsons, make a highly anticipated return to Canada for two performances: at Montreal’s Maison Symphonique on Saturday, March 4, and Toronto’s Roy Thomson Hall on Sunday, March 5. These performances also mark Maestro Nelsons’ conducting debut in Canada.

On Saturday, March 4, at 8 p.m., Andris Nelsons and the BSO take the stage at Montreal’s Maison Symphonique for a performance of Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 22, featuring renowned pianist and regular BSO guest artist Emanuel Ax, on a program with Berlioz’s masterpiece, Symphonie fantastique—
one of the BSO’s most popular signature works. On Sunday, March 5, at 3 p.m., at Toronto’s Roy Thomson Hall, Mr. Ax joins the orchestra and Mr. Nelsons for a performance of Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 2; the second half of the program will include a performance of Symphonie fantastique. The Boston Symphony Orchestra last performed in Montreal on March 9, 1984, and in Toronto on February 6, 1996; both of these performances were led by BSO Music Director Laureate Seiji Ozawa (BSO Music Director 1973-2002). For further information about the BSO’s past performances in Montreal and Toronto, please visit archives.bso.org.

The Montreal performance is presented by Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, and the Toronto concert is presented by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Roy Thomson Hall.

Quote from BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons
"I am very honored to bring the Boston Symphony Orchestra back to Montreal and Toronto for the first time in more than 20 years. I hope that the wonderful audiences there will enjoy discovering the fantastic and unique qualities of the BSO, one of the best orchestras in the world. This will be a special occasion also for our orchestra musicians with close personal connections to Canada, and we all greatly look forward to sharing our love and passion of making music together.

For these special concerts, we are incredibly thrilled to be performing Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2 with one of our favorite guest artists, the wonderful and inspirational pianist Emanuel Ax, who has a longstanding musical history with the BSO and brings such beauty to all of his performances. We will also bring the BSO's special tradition of French repertoire to Canada by including Symphonie fantastique in our program, one of the BSO’s signature pieces, to showcase the orchestra’s brilliant artistry.

On a personal note, I so look forward to visiting these two great cultural capitals of Canada for the first time in my life, and sharing the great music of the Boston Symphony Orchestra with music lovers at Montreal's Maison Symphonique and Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall."

Boston Symphony Orchestra Musicians with Associations to Canada
For several of the BSO players, these 2017 concerts in Montreal and Toronto will be a homecoming of sorts. Prior to his appointment as BSO concertmaster in 1984, Malcolm Lowe was concertmaster of the Quebec Symphony Orchestra. Born to musical parents on a farm in Hamiota, Manitoba – his father was a violinist and his mother a vocalist – Mr. Lowe moved with his family to Regina, Saskatchewan, at the age of nine, where he studied at the Regina Conservatory of Music with Howard Leyton-Brown, former concertmaster of the London Philharmonic. The recipient of many awards, he was one of the top laureate winners in the 1979 Montreal International Violin Competition. Mr. Lowe has returned many times to his native Canada for guest appearances as a soloist with the Toronto and Montreal Symphony Orchestras and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa.

BSO principal horn since 1998, James Sommerville grew up in Toronto and performed as associate principal horn in the Montreal Symphony Orchestra (1986-97), as third horn of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (1997-1998) and principal horn of the Canadian Opera Company (1985-87, 1990-94); Mr. Sommerville was music director of the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra from 2007-2015. BSO cellist Martha Babcock (1968-70) and bassoonist Suzanne Nelsen (1995-2000) also previously played in the Montreal Symphony. Associate principal bassoon Richard Ranti grew up in Montreal, violist Rebecca Gitter grew up in Toronto, and second clarinetist Michael Wayne was born in Hamilton. In addition, Leah Ferguson, who joined the BSO this past fall, was guest assistant principal viola for the Montreal Symphony Orchestra for two weeks during the 2015-16 season.
**The BSO’s touring history in Canada**

The upcoming performances will be the BSO's first concerts in Canada in 20 years; the BSO last performed in Montreal in 1984, and in Toronto in 1996. International tours have long played a significant role in the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s performance history. The orchestra’s connection to Canada dates back to 1893, when then-BSO concertmaster Franz Kneisel led the BSO in performances in Montreal and Toronto. Since then, a total of seven conductors, including BSO Music Directors Wilhelm Gericke, Pierre Monteux, Serge Koussevitzky, Charles Munch, Erich Leinsdorf, and Seiji Ozawa, have led the orchestra in concerts in three Canadian provinces: Ontario (Toronto, Ottawa, and Hamilton), Quebec (Montreal and Quebec City), and Manitoba (Winnipeg). The Boston Symphony Chamber Players—an ensemble made up of the principal string and wind players of the orchestra—have also toured throughout Canada since 1974, performing at venues in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, and Quebec City. [For a detailed BSO touring history click here.]

**Andris Nelsons biography**

In 2016-17, his third season as the BSO’s Ray and Maria Stata Music Director, Andris Nelsons leads the Boston Symphony Orchestra in fourteen wide-ranging subscription programs at Symphony Hall, repeating three of them at New York’s Carnegie Hall, followed by two concerts in Montreal and Toronto. In the summer of 2015, following his first season as music director, his contract with the Boston Symphony Orchestra was extended through the 2021-22 season. In addition, in 2017 he becomes Gewandhauskapellmeister of the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, in which capacity he will also bring both orchestras together for a unique multi-dimensional alliance. Following the 2015 Tanglewood season, Maestro Nelsons and the BSO undertook a twelve-concert, eight-city tour to major European capitals as well as the Lucerne, Salzburg, and Grafenegg festivals. A second European tour, to eight cities in Germany, Austria, and Luxembourg, took place in May 2016.

The fifteenth music director in the history of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Andris Nelsons made his BSO debut at Carnegie Hall in March 2011 and his Tanglewood debut in July 2012. His first CD with the BSO—live recordings of Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* Overture and Sibelius’s Symphony No. 2—was released in November 2014 on BSO Classics. In 2014-15, in collaboration with Deutsche Grammophon, he and the BSO initiated a multi-year recording project entitled “Shostakovich Under Stalin’s Shadow,” to include live performances of Shostakovich’s symphonies 5 through 10 and other works. The first disc, of Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 10, won the 2016 Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance and Gramophone Magazine’s Orchestral Award. The second release, of Shostakovich’s symphonies 5, 8, and 9, has received two 2017 Grammy nominations.

In the next few seasons, Andris Nelsons continues his collaborations with the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and Philharmonia Orchestra. A regular guest at the Royal Opera House, Vienna State Opera, and Metropolitan Opera, he was critically acclaimed as music director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra from 2008 to 2015. Under a new, exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon, he will record the complete Beethoven symphonies with the Vienna Philharmonic and Bruckner symphonies with the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig.

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. Mr. Nelsons is the subject of a 2013 DVD from Orfeo, a documentary film entitled “Andris Nelsons: Genius on Fire.”
**Emanuel Ax biography**

Born in Lvov, Poland, Emanuel Ax moved to Winnipeg, Canada, with his family as a young boy. He studied at the Juilliard School and Columbia University, and captured public attention in 1974 as winner of the first Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Tel Aviv. In 1975 he won the Michaels Award of Young Concert Artists, followed four years later by the coveted Avery Fisher Prize. An exponent of contemporary composers—with works already written for him by John Adams, Christopher Rouse, Krzysztof Penderecki, Bright Sheng, and Melinda Wagner—he features two newly commissioned works in his 2016-17 season. He performs the world premiere of HK Gruber’s Piano Concerto with the New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert, followed by the European premiere with the Berlin Philharmonic and Sir Simon Rattle. His recital program for the season includes works by Schubert and Chopin partnered with Samuel Adams’s *Impromptus (2015-2016)*, commissioned by Music Accord and inspired by Schubert. His ongoing relationship with the Boston Symphony includes concerts in Carnegie Hall, Montreal, and Toronto; with the Cleveland Orchestra he is the featured artist for the season-opening gala; and he returns to the orchestras of Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Toronto, Seattle, Milwaukee, and Detroit. A Sony Classical exclusive recording artist since 1987, he received Grammys for the second and third volumes of his Haydn piano sonata cycle. With Yo-Yo Ma he has made Grammy-winning recordings of the Beethoven and Brahms sonatas for cello and piano. Other releases include Mendelssohn trios with Mr. Ma and Itzhak Perlman; Strauss’s *Enoch Arden* narrated by Patrick Stewart; discs of two-piano music by Brahms and Rachmaninoff with Yefim Bronfman; “Variations,” recipient of an Echo Klassik Award; a duo recording with Mr. Perlman of sonatas by Fauré and Strauss; concertos of Liszt and Schoenberg; three solo Brahms albums; tangos by Astor Piazzolla, and the premiere recording of John Adams’s *Century Rolls*. In the 2004-05 season Mr. Ax contributed to an International Emmy-winning BBC documentary commemorating the Holocaust that aired on the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Also devoted to chamber music, he has worked regularly with such artists as Young Uck Kim, Cho-Liang Lin, Mr. Ma, Edgar Meyer, Peter Serkin, Jaime Laredo, and the late Isaac Stern. Emanuel Ax resides in New York City with his wife, pianist Yoko Nozaki. They have two children together, Joseph and Sarah. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and holds honorary doctorates of music from Yale and Columbia universities. Emanuel Ax has appeared repeatedly with the Boston Symphony Orchestra since his BSO debut at Tanglewood in 1978 and his subscription series debut in 1980. In the summer of 2015 he was named one of Tanglewood’s first Koussevitzky Artists, an honor named for the summer festival’s visionary founder and created to honor artists whose presence at Tanglewood has made a lasting impact on Tanglewood’s musical and educational programs.

**BSO History**

Now in its 136th season, 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. 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 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 sets an international standard for performances of lighter music.
Launched in 1996, the BSO’s website, bso.org, is the largest and most-visited orchestral website in the United States, receiving approximately 7 million visitors annually on its full site as well as its smart phone/mobile device-friendly web format. The BSO is also on Facebook and Twitter, 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 twenty 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 thirteen 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 thirteenth music director in 1973. His historic twenty-nine-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.

**SPONSORSHIPS**
Bank of America is the Lead Sponsor and Dell EMC is the Supporting Sponsor of the 2016-17 BSO Season. Opening Night at Symphony is a Mastercard Priceless® experience. The Arbella Insurance Foundation is the sponsor of the BSO Casual Fridays Series, BSO College Card, Youth & Family Concerts, and the BSO Young Professionals (YoPro) program. Fairmont Copley Plaza begins its 15th season as the Official Hotel of the BSO, and Delta Air Lines returns as the Official Airline of the BSO. Commonwealth Worldwide Chauffeured Transportation begins its 14th season as the Official Chauffeured Transportation of the BSO.

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**Concert listings**
Saturday, March 4, 8 p.m.
Montreal, QC
Maison Symphonique
Andris Nelsons, conductor
Emanuel Ax, piano
MOZART Piano Concerto No. 22 in E-flat, K.482
BERLIOZ *Symphonie fantastique*

Sunday, March 5, 3 p.m.
Toronto, ON
Roy Thomson Hall
Andris Nelsons, conductor
Emanuel Ax, piano
BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 2
BERLIOZ *Symphonie fantastique*
Tickets: [http://www.roythomson.com/BostonSymphonyOrchestra](http://www.roythomson.com/BostonSymphonyOrchestra)