BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND MUSIC DIRECTOR ANDRIS NELSONS OPEN 2017-18 SEASON ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, WITH AN ALL-BERNSTEIN PROGRAM, LAUNCHING A YEAR-LONG TRIBUTE DURING A WORLDWIDE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF BERNSTEIN’S BIRTH

OPENING NIGHT PROGRAM FEATURES MEZZO-SOPRANO FREDERICA VON STADE AS SOLOIST AND HOST; SOPRANO JULIA BULLOCK IN HER BSO DEBUT; AND BSO PRINCIPAL FLUTE ELIZABETH ROWE

ELEGANT BLACK-TIE PARTY, FEATURING FOOD, DRINK, AND DÉCOR ALL INSPIRED BY LEONARD BERNSTEIN, TO TAKE PLACE POST-CONCERT IN SYMPHONY HALL

THE OPENING NIGHT GALA HAS RAISED OVER $1.1 MILLION TO DATE

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To view an online press kit with complete programs, concert listing, ticket information, photos, and artist bios, click here: www.bso.org/presskit

BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons and the Boston Symphony Orchestra open the 2017-18 season (September 22, 2017-May 4, 2018) on Friday, September 22, at 6 p.m., with a special gala concert devoted to the music of Leonard Bernstein, marking the beginning of a season-long celebration of the centennial of the legendary American composer/conductor’s birth. Legendary mezzo-soprano Frederica
von Stade serves as host for the all-Bernstein program, which includes the ebullient Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story* and the Divertimento for Orchestra—the latter a BSO centennial commission premiered by the orchestra in 1980. BSO principal flutist Elizabeth Rowe is soloist in the composer’s introspective *Halil* for flute, percussion, and strings; and Ms. von Stade and Julia Bullock, a soprano acclaimed for her performances of Bernstein’s music (making her BSO debut) perform a selection of Bernstein’s vocal music.

An elegant black-tie party, chaired by Barbara (Suki) and Miquel de Bragança and Lynn Dale and Frank Wisneski, to take place in rooms throughout Symphony Hall after the performance, will feature cocktails and an Opening Night gala dinner inspired by Leonard Bernstein’s favorite foods and drinks, with a menu created by Boston Gourmet. The opening night gala concert has raised over $1.1 million to date.

**LEONARD BERNSTEIN AND THE BSO**

Leonard Bernstein’s fifty year association with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Tanglewood began in the summer of 1940, when he became a member of Serge Koussevitzky’s (BSO Music Director, 1924-1949; Founder of Tanglewood and the Berkshire Music Center, now known as the Tanglewood and the Tanglewood Music Center, the BSO’s prestigious summer music academy) first conducting class at the new Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, in part thanks to a written recommendation from Aaron Copland. Bernstein described that summer as “the happiest and most productive of my life,” in a letter to Koussevitzky, who became a mentor and great friend of Bernstein’s over the next ten years. Bernstein’s time as a student at Tanglewood played an integral role preparing him for his first big break in 1943, when, at age 25, he stepped in for Bruno Walter in a nationally broadcast concert with the New York Philharmonic. He made his BSO debut the following winter in February 1944, leading his own Symphony No. 1, *Jeremiah*, and Copland’s *El México*.

In the decade following his summer as a student at the Berkshire Music Center, Bernstein became Koussevitzky’s assistant at Tanglewood (beginning in 1942). At Tanglewood and with the BSO he lead some of the most important performances in 20th century musical history, including the first American performance of Benjamin Britten’s opera *Peter Grimes* (commissioned by Koussevitzky), and the world premiere performance of Olivier Messiaen’s *Turangalîla Symphony* (commissioned by the BSO). In 1951, after Koussevitzky’s death, Bernstein headed up the orchestral and conducting programs at Tanglewood, where he remained active as a conductor and teacher for the next 40 years. Although he also led the BSO frequently in performances at Symphony Hall in Boston, his final Symphony Hall appearances took place in 1972, when he led the orchestra in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

In 1988, to celebrate Bernstein’s 70th birthday, Tanglewood threw a four-hour concert/birthday party, *Bernstein at 70!*, that was aired on PBS’s Great Performances, was hosted by Beverly Sills, and featured a star-studded line-up. Bernstein made his final conducting appearances just two years later, leading the BSO and Tanglewood Music Center orchestras at Tanglewood in August 1990, leading the BSO in a dramatic performance of Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony as well as the “Four Sea Interludes” from *Peter Grimes* for his final performance on August 19, only two months before his death on October 14, 1990.

Bernstein composed two works for the Boston Symphony Orchestra: his Symphony No. 3, *Kaddish*, commissioned for the orchestra’s 75th anniversary and given its American premiere by the BSO in 1964; and his Divertimento, a BSO centennial commissioned that was premiered in September 1980.
(Divertimento will be performed on the September 22 gala program.) The BSO also gave the world premiere performance of a work dedicated to Koussevitzky, Bernstein’s his Symphony No. 2, *Age of Anxiety*, with the composer as piano soloist; the first concert performance of his suite from his only film score, *On the Waterfront*; and the American premieres of his *Serenade (after Plato’s Symposium)* and *Halil*.

**DETAILS OF THE BSO’S OPENING NIGHT GALA PARTY ON SEPTEMBER 22**

**GALA DINNER DECORATIONS**
Following the concert, Andris Nelsons, Julia Bullock, Frederica von Stade, and some of the Boston Symphony Orchestra musicians will join the Opening Night gala attendees for cocktails and a celebratory dinner. This year’s gala will take place in different rooms in Symphony Hall, decorated in a palette of colors inspired by the corresponding autumnal equinox—orange, burgundy, fuchsia, and greens. The décor will feature a variety of photos, memorabilia, and other elements related to Leonard Bernstein, including a drawing of Bernstein by Olga Koussevitzky, which will adorn the backs of the chairs in one room; and the score to Bernstein’s Divertimento as the tabletop in another.

**GALA DINNER MENU BY BOSTON GOURMET**
The BSO’s opening night dinner menu was inspired by some of Leonard Bernstein’s favorite foods—tomatoes, radicchio, steak, and corn. A Rob Roy cocktail, Bernstein’s favorite and one that he enjoyed with Olga Koussevitzky, will be served throughout the evening, as well. The three course dinner menu features a first course of Fall salad of radicchio, arugula, and mizuna red wine-poached pears, with Vermont chevre, dried cranberries, and a pomegranate dressing; a main course of either grilled filet mignon, served with Great Hill blue cheese and basil compound butter, smoked tomato jam, and corn cake with sweet potato puree and crispy Brussels sprout leaves, or a vegan and gluten-free vegetable, tofu, and polenta napoleon with soba rice noodles and basil puree, served with Swiss chard, parsley, radish, and pomegranate seeds (vegan and gluten free); and a pre-dessert course of chocolate-dipped ginger to finish. Wines served throughout the evening include Barone Fini Pinot Grigio from Valdadige, Italy; Hob Nob Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from Vin de Pays d'Oc, France; and Ramon Bilbao "Crianza" Temperanillo, from Rioja, Spain.

Following the dinner, desserts will be served from the stage, including mini New York cheese cake bites with caramel apple compote; white chocolate-dipped chevre cheesecake bites; cherry pie pops; chocolate cake buttons with salted caramel; and tiny apple crisps.

The post-dinner entertainment will include live and recorded music by Bernstein, performed on a Steinway & Sons Spirio player piano, as well as some Bernstein inspired living décor from ToUch Events.

The Opening Night Gala will feature flower arrangements by *Winston Flowers*. Rentals will be provided by *Nuage* and *Be Our Guest*.

**2017-18 BSO SEASON BEGINS SEPTEMBER 22 WITH LEONARD BERNSTEIN CENTENNIAL SEASON CELEBRATION LED BY ANDRIS NELSONS AND FEATURING MEZZO-SOPRANO FREDERICA VON STADE AS HOST**
Music Director *Andris Nelsons* and the *Boston Symphony Orchestra* open the 2017-18 season on Friday, September 22, with the *Leonard Bernstein Centennial Season Celebration*, the first of the orchestra’s performances this season commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Boston-born conductor and
composer’s birth in 1918. Legendary mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade serves as host for the all-Bernstein program, which includes the ebullient Symphonic Dances from West Side Story and the Divertimento for Orchestra—the latter a BSO centennial commission premiered by the orchestra in 1980. BSO principal flutist Elizabeth Rowe is soloist in the composer’s introspective Halil for flute, percussion, and strings; and Ms. von Stade and Julia Bullock, a soprano acclaimed for her performances of Bernstein’s music (making her BSO debut) perform a selection of Bernstein’s vocal music.

Click here to view the complete 2017-18 BSO concert schedule.

Ticket Information in Brief
Subscriptions for the BSO’s 2017-18 season are available now by calling the BSO Subscription Office at 888-266-7575 or online through the BSO’s website (http://www.bso.org/subscriptions). Single tickets may be purchased by phone through SymphonyCharge (617-266-1200 or 888-266-1200), online through the BSO’s website (www.bso.org), or in person at the Symphony Hall Box Office (301 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston). There is a $6.50 service fee for all tickets purchased online or by phone through SymphonyCharge.

The BSO’s <$40=$20 program allows patrons under the age of 40 to purchase tickets for $20. The BSO College Card and High School Card are the best way for students and aspiring young musicians to experience the BSO on a regular basis. A limited number of Rush Tickets for Boston Symphony Orchestra subscription concerts on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Friday afternoons are set aside to be sold on the day of a performance. The Boston Symphony Orchestra offers groups advanced ticket reservations and flexible payment options for BSO concerts at Symphony Hall.

Radio Broadcasts and Streaming
BSO concerts are broadcast regularly on 99.5 WCRB, a service of WGBH. Saturday evening concerts are broadcast live on 99.5 in Boston, with encore broadcasts on Monday evenings. These broadcasts are also streamed live online at www.classicalwcrb.org.

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Sponsorships
Bank of America is the Lead Sponsor and Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited is the Supporting Sponsor of the 2017-18 BSO Season. 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 returns for the 16th season as the Official Hotel of the BSO, and Delta Air Lines returns as the Official Airline of the BSO. Commonwealth Worldwide Chauffeured Transportation returns for its 15th season as the Official Chauffeured Transportation of the BSO.

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BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OPENING NIGHT PROGRAM LISTING, SEPTEMBER 22
Friday, September 22, 6 p.m.
Opening Night
Leonard Bernstein Centennial Season Celebration
Andris Nelsons, conductor
Elizabeth Rowe, flute
Julia Bullock, soprano*
Frederica von Stade, mezzo-soprano and host
ALL-BERNSTEIN PROGRAM
Divertimento for Orchestra
Halil, for flute and orchestra
Vocal selections
Symphonic Dances from West Side Story

*denotes BSO debut