THOMAS WILKINS LEADS BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA IN ANNUAL YOUTH AND FAMILY CONCERTS, MARCH 7-10 AT SYMPHONY HALL

CONCERT PROGRAM, “LEARNING BY HEART” – A JOURNEY OF EXPLORATION AND ENGAGEMENT, INCLUDES MUSIC BY BERLIOZ, CHABRIER, PROKOFIEV, BIZET, JOHN ADAMS, STILL, AND DVOŘÁK

PIANIST AMIR SIRAJ—THE 2017 BSO CONCERTO COMPETITION WINNER—JOINS MR. WILKINS FOR THE FIRST MOVEMENT (ALLEGRO MAESTOSO) FROM LISZT’S PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1 IN E-FLAT ON MARCH 10

THE 2017 BSO YOUTH & FAMILY CONCERT SERIES IS SPONSORED BY THE ARBELLA INSURANCE FOUNDATION

Youth Concerts to take place Wednesday, March 7-Friday, March 9, 10 a.m. and 12 noon; Family Concerts to take place Saturday, March 10, at 10 a.m. and 12 noon

For further details on the BSO’s Education and Community Engagement programs, please visit: http://www.bso.org/brands/bso/education-community.aspx

The 2017-18 BSO Youth and Family Concerts series will take place Wednesday, March 7, through Saturday, March 10 under the direction of Germeshausen Youth and Family Concerts Conductor Thomas Wilkins. The theme for this year’s concerts is “Learning by Heart” – A Journey of Exploration and Engagement. The program will include Berlioz’s Roman Carnival Overture, Chabrier’s Marche Joyeuse,
“Death of Tybalt” from Prokofiev’s ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, Intermezzo from Bizet’s *Carmen*, John Adams’s *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, the fourth movement (Aspiration) from Still’s Symphony No. 1, and the fourth movement (Allegro ma non troppo) from Dvořák’s Symphony No. 8. Weekday Youth Concerts, designed for students in grades 4-6, take place Wednesday, March 7, at 10 a.m. and 12 noon; Thursday, March 8, at 10 a.m. and 12 noon; and Friday, March 9, at 10 a.m. and 12 noon.

Seventeen-year-old pianist Amir Siraj, a freshman at Harvard University, was the winner of the 2017 BSO Concerto Competition, and will join Mr. Wilkins and the BSO for a performance of the first movement (Allegro maestoso) from Liszt’s Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat at the two Family Concerts to take place on Saturday, March 10, at 10 a.m. and 12 noon. These concerts will also include Dance of the Clowns from Mendelssohn’s incidental music to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and are especially designed for children ages 3-8 and their families.

The 10 a.m. Family Concert on March 10 will feature a variety of pre-concert educational activities for young people from 9 to 10 a.m., including an Instrument Playground, where children have a chance to try out a variety of musical instruments, a musically themed craft activity, theater workshop activities, and an instrument demonstration by a BSO musician.

**ADDITIONAL SPRING 2018 YOUTH AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

The Boston Symphony Orchestra’s Education and Community Engagement programs offer individuals of all ages and backgrounds a rich variety of opportunities to experience orchestral music and the BSO, including programs designed to support the department’s mission of building broader relationships throughout the greater Boston community and beyond. In partnership with the Boston Children’s Museum, the BSO’s Concerts for Very Young People bring BSO musicians together with children and their families for live, interactive performances. This series will continue Sunday, March 25, at 2:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. at the Boston Children’s Museum. In partnership with the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras, conductor Marta Zurad and magician Matt Roberts offer a program entitled “Step in Time” at Symphony Hall on Saturday, April 14. More details on the BSO’s Education and Community Engagement programs are available at [http://www.bso.org/brands/bso/education-community.aspx](http://www.bso.org/brands/bso/education-community.aspx).

**THOMAS WILKINS, GERMESHAUSEN YOUTH AND FAMILY CONCERTS CONDUCTOR**

Music director of the Omaha Symphony since 2005, Thomas Wilkins is also principal conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra and holds the Germeshausen Youth and Family Concerts Conductor chair with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. In August 2017 he assumed the Henry A. Upper Chair of Orchestral Conducting established by the late Barbara and David Jacobs as part of Indiana University’s “Matching the Promise” campaign. Past positions have included resident conductor of the Detroit Symphony and Florida Orchestra (Tampa Bay), and associate conductor of the Richmond (Virginia) Symphony. He also has served on the music faculties of North Park University in Chicago, the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga, and Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. Devoted to promoting a lifelong enthusiasm for music, Thomas Wilkins has been hailed as a master at communicating and connecting with audiences. Following his highly successful first season with the Boston Symphony, the *Boston Globe* named him among the “Best People and Ideas of 2011.” In 2014 he received the prestigious Outstanding Artist award
at the Nebraska Governor’s Arts Awards, for his significant contribution to music in the state. A native of Norfolk, Virginia, Thomas Wilkins is a graduate of the Shenandoah Conservatory of Music and the New England Conservatory of Music. He resides with his wife Sheri-Lee in Omaha. They are the proud parents of twin daughters, Erica and Nicole.

AMIR SIRAJ, PIANO
Eighteen-year-old American pianist Amir Siraj is a 2017 U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts. In the past year, he has performed at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., Millennium Park’s Pritzker Pavilion in Chicago, the Atlantic Council Awards in New York, the New World Center in Miami, JBLFest in Las Vegas, and Carnegie Hall. He has been guest soloist with orchestras including the Boston Pops Orchestra (as grand prizewinner of the 2016 Fidelity Investments Young Artist Competition), the New England Philharmonic, the Quincy Symphony Orchestra, the Metrowest Symphony Orchestra, and the Midwest Young Artists Symphony Orchestra, and has received first prize at the Harvard Musical Association, and second prize at the Kaufman International Youth Piano Competition. A guest artist on NPR’s “From The Top” at Jordan Hall, he was selected as a winner of the National YoungArts Competition. In addition, he has appeared at venues including Boston’s Symphony Hall, Bowdoin International Music Festival, American Liszt Society, and the Max Reger Foundation of America, among many others. Believing in the power of music and channeling it for social good and healing, Amir Siraj has performed in and directed many benefit concerts and outreach programs for Music For Food, Massachusetts General Hospital, Dana–Farber Cancer Institute, Goddard House, and more. He also performed as part of Christopher O’Riley’s new piece “This Land/Our Land” with other young musicians with immigrant stories. Having recently recorded with Lang Lang on Deutsche Grammophon, Amir Siraj is currently studying piano with Wha Kyung Byun and studying astrophysics at Harvard, where he also sings with the Krokodiloes, Harvard’s oldest a cappella group.

FAMILY CONCERT TICKET INFORMATION
Tickets for the March 10 performance at 10 a.m. and 12 noon are $20 per adult; children 18 and under are free. 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 $1.50 service fee for all Youth and Family Concert tickets purchased online or by phone through SymphonyCharge.

ARBELLA INSURANCE FOUNDATION SPONSORSHIP
The Arbella Insurance Foundation is the sponsor of the BSO Youth and Family Concerts. Additionally, for the 5th consecutive year, the Arbella Foundation has provided BSO/Arbella School Bus Program grants to schools attending the 2018 Youth Concerts to help defray costs associated with field trips to Symphony Hall. This season, 50 grants were awarded to schools in 29 districts throughout the Greater Boston area.

BACKGROUND ON BSO YOUTH AND FAMILY CONCERTS
Inaugurated as “Young People’s Concerts” by Wilhelm Gericks (1845-1925) in 1888 and revived as an ongoing program by Harry Ellis Dickson (1908-2003) in 1959, the BSO’s Youth and Family Concerts reach over 15,000 young people, educators, and family members annually. Harry Ellis Dickson held the title of
Youth Concerts Conductor until Keith Lockhart took over the role in 1995, holding the title until 2004. Conductor Thomas Wilkins was appointed to the position in February 2011. In addition to introducing students to the BSO and orchestral music, the Youth and Family Concerts have played an active role in launching a significant number of talented young people on to careers as musicians and composers. Young soloists chosen by competition have appeared on BSO Family Concerts, and works by high school student-composers have been performed. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Youth Concerts Series, the BSO launched a new partnership with the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra that began in the 2009-10 season, offering young people the opportunity to hear programs geared especially for them and performed by their peers. The 2012-13 BSO season ushered in a significant expansion to the partnership including a program called “BYSO/BSO: Partnering for the Future,” which promises to develop new training programs and offer joint performance opportunities for young musicians, audiences, and the wider community, while exploring innovative ways to continue to foster the future of classical music.

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YOUTH CONCERTS
Wednesday, March 7, 10 a.m. & 12 noon
Thursday, March 8, 10 a.m. & 12 noon
Friday, March 9, 10 a.m. & 12 noon
Boston Symphony Orchestra
Thomas Wilkins, conductor
“Learning By Heart” – A Journey of Exploration and Engagement
BERLIOZ Roman Carnival Overture
CHABRIER Marche Joyeuse
PROKOFIEV “Death of Tybalt,” from the ballet Romeo and Juliet
BIZET Intermezzo, from Carmen
John ADAMS Short Ride in a Fast Machine
STILL 4th movement (Aspiration) from Symphony No. 1
DVOŘÁK 4th movement (Allegro ma non troppo) from Symphony No. 8

FAMILY CONCERTS
Saturday, March 10, 10 a.m. & 12 noon
Boston Symphony Orchestra
Thomas Wilkins, conductor
BERLIOZ Roman Carnival Overture
CHABRIER Marche Joyeuse
PROKOFIEV “Death of Tybalt,” from the ballet Romeo and Juliet
BIZET Intermezzo, from Carmen
MENDELSSOHN Dance of the Clowns, from the incidental music to A Midsummer Night’s Dream
LISZT 1st movement (Allegro maestoso) from Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat
Amir Siraj, piano, 2017 BSO Concerto Competition Winner
DVOŘÁK 4th movement (Allegro ma non troppo) from Symphony No. 8