ANDRIS NELSONS AND THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA APPOINT
BLAISE DÉJARDIN—A BSO SECTION CELLIST SINCE 2008—AS WINNER OF THE
ORCHESTRA’S COVETED PRINCIPAL CELLO POSITION

MR. DÉJARDIN—who competed with 60 national and international
applicants through three rounds of a blind audition process—
succeeds Jules Eskin who held the position for 52 years

MR. DÉJARDIN TAKES UP HIS NEW POSITION WITH THE ORCHESTRA DURING THE BSO’S
OPENING CONCERT OF THE 2018 TANGLEWOOD SEASON ON JULY 6

The Boston Symphony Orchestra and its music director Andris Nelsons are pleased to announce the appointment of Blaise Déjardin—a BSO section cellist since September 2008—to the position of BSO Principal Cello. A native of Strasbourg, France, and a graduate of the Paris Conservatoire, Mr. Déjardin succeeds former principal cellist Jules Eskin, who held the title for 52 years, from August 1964 until the time of his passing in November 2016. Mr. Déjardin—the 14th musician to hold the position of Principal Cellist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra since its founding in 1881—will also become a member of the Boston Symphony Chamber Players. Mr. Déjardin will take on his new duties with the orchestra as Principal Cello beginning with the BSO’s opening concert of the 2018 Tanglewood season on July 6, featuring works of Mozart and Tchaikovsky, under the direction of Andris Nelsons (click here for further details).

Blaise Déjardin was one of approximately 200 national and international applicants for the position of BSO principal cellist, many of whom hold or have held positions in major orchestras throughout the country. After culling down the initial applicant pool to 60 cellists, the blind audition process—in front of a committee of BSO musicians—included two preliminary and one semifinal round of auditions, which
resulted in a pool of four finalists chosen to move on in the process. For the final step in the audition process, two cellists were asked to perform in the open for BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons and the audition committee. Mr. Nelsons and the committee then declared Mr. Déjardin the winner of the principal cello audition, with the 33-year old musician being only the second person to hold the position since 1964, when his predecessor, Mr. Eskin, was awarded the post. As principal cellist, Mr. Déjardin will lead the BSO’s cello section in concerts at Symphony Hall, Tanglewood, and Carnegie Hall, as well as for all national and international tour performances. He will also be featured in all cello solo passages that are part of the orchestra’s regular performance repertoire.

QUOTE FROM BSO RAY AND MARIA STAFA MUSIC DIRECTOR ANDRIS NELSONS
“It is truly quite remarkable that one of the BSO’s own cellists—Blaise Déjardin—following two highly competitive rounds of national auditions for the orchestra’s coveted Principal Cello post—has been appointed to the prestigious position. Blaise is an absolute complete musician whose exquisite breadth of tone, beautiful musical phrasing, and inspired creativity and imagination surpassed an incredibly talented field of musicians, all competing for a position that had been filled for more than half a century by the amazing Jules Eskin. Blaise’s gorgeous musicianship is only matched by his wonderful camaraderie with his fellow BSO musicians and his supreme dedication to conveying the true spirit of the music.”

QUOTE FROM BSO PRINCIPAL CELLO DESIGNATE BLAISE DÉJARDIN
“It is a great honor to succeed Jules Eskin as principal cello of the BSO. Through my 10 years playing in the BSO, I have learned so much from all my colleagues and I feel very blessed to have been chosen by them for this exciting new adventure in my musical life. Playing with Maestro Nelsons has been incredibly inspiring since his very first rehearsal with the orchestra and I look forward to working more closely with him in the years to come. This is more than a dream come true and I couldn't feel any luckier to call Boston home.”

Blaise Déjardin, Boston Symphony Orchestra Principal Cello

Philip R. Allen chair, endowed in perpetuity
Strasbourg-born cellist Blaise Déjardin was appointed principal cello of the Boston Symphony Orchestra by BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons in spring 2018, having joined the BSO’s cello section in 2008. Previously, Déjardin was a member of the European Union Youth Orchestra and the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester. He was a founding member of the Boston-based string orchestra A Far Cry, and in 2010 he founded the acclaimed Boston Cello Quartet with three BSO colleagues. He has arranged numerous pieces for cello ensembles, earning four ASCAP Plus Awards and receiving commissions from Yo-Yo Ma, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and A Far Cry. In 2013 he launched Opus Cello, his online sheet music publishing company. He has served as artistic director of the Boston Cello Society since its creation in 2015. Mr. Déjardin has performed as soloist with orchestra around the world. In 2008 he gave the U.S. premiere of French composer Edith Canat de Chizy’s Formes du vent for solo cello. A dedicated chamber musician, he spent two summers at Ravinia’s Steans Institute for Young Artists. He holds a first prize in Cello with highest honors from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique of Paris, as well as a master of music diploma and a graduate diploma from the New England Conservatory in Boston. His main teachers were Philippe Muller, Laurence Lesser, and Bernard Greenhouse. Mr. Déjardin made his debut with orchestra at age fourteen performing Haydn’s C major concerto at the Corum in Montpellier, France. Among his numerous awards and honors, he was awarded first prize at the Maurice Gendron International Cello Competition and was also the youngest prizewinner at the 6th Adam International Cello Competition in New Zealand. In 2007 he made his Paris recital debut at Le Petit Palais as a laureate of the program Declic supporting emerging young soloists in France. He has taught privately and at the New England
Conservatory and Tanglewood Music Center. Prior to his first performance as principal cellist with the orchestra at Tanglewood on July 6, Mr. Déjardin officially takes on the position during the Boston Symphony Chamber Players’ upcoming performances at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, June 19-24.

BSO Principal Cellists – 1881-present
1881-1882 (first half of season): Wulf Fries
1881-1882 (later in the season): Carl Bayrhoffer
1882-1884: Wilhelm Muller
1884-1889: Fritz K. E. Giese
1889-1891: Johannes Francis Anton Hekking
1891-1903: Alwin Schroeder
1903-1904: Rudolf Krasselt
1905-1914: Heinrich Warnke (co-principal cello 1912-1914)
1910-1912: Alwin Schroeder
1912-1914: Otto Urack (co-principal cello)
1914-1919: Joseph Malkin
1919-1948: Jean Bedetti
1948-1964: Samuel Houston Mayes
1964-2016: Jules Eskin
2018-: Blaise Déjardin

#  #  #

PRESS CONTACT:
Bernadette Horgan, Director of Public Relations (bhorgan@bso.org) 617-638-9285
Taryn Lott, Assistant Director of Public Relations (tlott@bso.org) 617-638-9283