FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Monday, March 11, 2019

THOMAS WILKINS LEADS BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA IN
ANNUAL YOUTH AND FAMILY CONCERTS, MARCH 27-30 AT
SYMPHONY HALL

CONCERT PROGRAM, "RULE NO. 1: ALWAYS TAKE THE SCENIC ROUTE," INCLUDES MUSIC BY
RIMSKY-KORSAKOV, GROFÉ, BRITTEN, ROSSINI, ELGAR, RESPIGHI, AND DAVID DZUBAY

VIOLINIST MERIEL BIZRI—THE 2019 BSO CONCERTO COMPETITION WINNER—JOINS
MR. WILKINS FOR THE FIRST MOVEMENT OF SIBELIUS’ VIOLIN CONCERTO IN D MINOR ON
THURSDAY, MARCH 28, AT 10 A.M.

THE 2019 BSO YOUTH & FAMILY CONCERT SERIES IS
SPONSORED BY THE ARBELLA INSURANCE FOUNDATION

Youth Concerts to take place Wednesday, March 27-Friday, March 29, 10 a.m. and 12 noon; Family
Concerts to take place Saturday, March 30, 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 2018–19 BSO Youth and Family Concerts series will take place Wednesday, March 27, through
Saturday, March 30, under the direction of Germeshausen Youth and Family Concerts Conductor Thomas
Wilkins. The theme for this year’s concerts is “Rule No. 1: Always Take the Scenic Route." The program
will include Rimsky-Korsakov’s Procession of the Nobles, from *Mlada*; Grofé’s Sunrise, from *Grand Canyon Suite*; Storm, from the Four Sea Interludes in Britten’s *Peter Grimes*; the overture to Rossini’s *William Tell*; Nimrod from Elgar’s *Enigma* Variations; David Dzubay’s *Ra*; and Pines of the Appian Way from Respighi’s *Pines of Rome*. Weekday Youth Concerts, designed for students in grades 4-6, take place Wednesday, March 27, at 10 a.m. and 12 noon; Thursday, March 28, at 10 a.m. and 12 noon; and Friday, March 29, at 10 a.m. and 12 noon.

Seventeen-year-old violinist Meriel Bizri, a junior at Deerfield Academy, was the winner of the 2019 BSO Concerto Competition, and will join Mr. Wilkins and the BSO for a performance of the first movement from Sibelius’ Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47, at the Youth Concert on Thursday, March 28, at 10 a.m.

The 10 a.m. Family Concert on March 30 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 and a musically themed craft activity.

**ADDITIONAL SPRING 2019 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 Youth Symphony Orchestras, conductor Marta Zurad and magician Matt Roberts offer a program entitled “Suite Surprise” at Symphony Hall on Saturday, April 13, at 12 noon. 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**

Thomas Wilkins is Music Director of the Omaha Symphony, a position he has held since 2005. Additionally, he is Principal Conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, and holds the Geremieshausen Family and Youth Concert Conductor Chair with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. This season, he makes his BSO subscription series debut with a program of music by Duke Ellington, Florence Price, Arthur Hailstork, and Roberto Sierra. In August 2017 Mr. Wilkins assumed the Henry A. Upper chair of Orchestral Conducting established by the late Barbara and David Jacobs as a 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 (VA) Symphony. He also has served on the music faculties of North Park University (Chicago), the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga, and Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.

Devoted to promoting a lifelong enthusiasm for music, Thomas Wilkins brings energy and commitment to audiences of all ages. He is hailed as a master at communicating and connecting with audiences. Following his highly successful first season with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the *Boston Globe* named him among the “Best People and Ideas of 2011.” In 2014, Wilkins received the prestigious “Outstanding Artist” award at the Nebraska Governor’s Arts Awards, for his significant contribution to music in the state. And in March 2018, the Longy School of Music awarded Thomas Wilkins the Leonard Bernstein Lifetime Achievement Award for the Elevation of Music in Society.

During his conducting career, he has led orchestras throughout the United States, including the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Cleveland Orchestra—to both of which he returned to guest conduct in
the 2016–2017 season. Additionally, he has conducted the New York Philharmonic, Atlanta Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, Cincinnati Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Houston Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Utah Symphony, and the National Symphony in Washington, D.C., as well at the Grant Park Music Festival in Chicago, to name a few.

His commitment to community has been demonstrated by his participation on several boards of directors, including the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, the Charles Drew Health Center (Omaha), the Center Against Spouse Abuse in Tampa Bay, and the Museum of Fine Arts as well as the Academy Preparatory Center both in St. Petersburg, FL. Currently he serves as chairman of the board for the Raymond James Charitable Endowment Fund and as national ambassador for the non-profit World Pediatric Project headquartered in Richmond, VA, which provides children throughout Central America and the Caribbean with critical surgical and diagnostic care.

A native of Norfolk, VA, Thomas Wilkins is a graduate of the Shenandoah Conservatory of Music and the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. He resides with his wife Sheri-Lee in Omaha. They are the proud parents of twin daughters, Erica and Nicole.

**MERIEL BIZRI, VIOLIN**
Meriel Bizri, 17, began Suzuki violin lessons in her native Minneapolis at the age of three. Ms. Bizri currently studies with Lynn Chang at the New England Conservatory’s NEC Prep; prior to moving to New England in 2015, her primary violin teacher was Lucia P. May (St. Paul and now Cambridge, Massachusetts). Ms. Bizri has performed in masterclasses or lessons with Nora Chastain, Daniel Gaede, Mihaela Martin, and Kim Kashkashian, among others. She is in her third season as a member of the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra (BPYO) and recently won the BPYO Concerto Competition, shortly before winning the BSO Competition. With the BPYO, she has had the privilege of playing not only in Symphony Hall but also on tour in Europe and South America. From age ten, she participated in the summer Bravo! program at the University of Minnesota, and since 2015 has been an avid participant at Greenwood Music Camp. An enthusiastic collaborator, Ms. Bizri has participated in in-depth chamber music studies with cellist Bruce Coppock since 2010, most recently as a participant in the annual QuartetLAB project and has played with ensembles coached by members of the Chiara Quartet and Spektral Quartet, among others. She has performed at the University of Minnesota, Greenwood Music Camp, Brookhaven at Lexington, and at gala events for Benjamin Zander’s BPYO. A dedicated student of nonmusical topics, Ms. Bizri is completing her junior year as a boarder at Deerfield Academy. When she is not studying or practicing, she enjoys sleeping!

**MARCH 30 FAMILY CONCERT TICKET INFORMATION**
Tickets for the March 30 performances 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](http://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 6th consecutive year, the Arbella Foundation has provided BSO/Arbella School Bus Program grants to schools attending the 2019 Youth Concerts to help defray costs associated with field trips to Symphony Hall. This season, 50 grants were awarded to schools in 31 districts throughout the Greater Boston area.
BACKGROUND ON BSO YOUTH AND FAMILY CONCERTS

Inaugurated as “Young People’s Concerts” by Wilhelm Gericke (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 Orchestras that began in the 2009-10 season, offering young people the opportunity to hear programs geared especially toward 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.

PRESS CONTACTS:
Bernadette Horgan, Director of Public Relations (bhorgan@bso.org) 617-638-9285
Matt Erikson, Senior Publicist (mailto:merikson@bso.org) 617-638-9284

YOUTH CONCERTS

Wednesday, March 27, 10 a.m. & 12 noon
Thursday, March 28, 10 a.m. & 12 noon
Friday, March 29, 10 a.m. & 12 noon
Boston Symphony Orchestra
Thomas Wilkins, conductor
Meriel Bizri, violin (March 28, 10 a.m. concert only)
“Rule No. 1: Always Take the Scenic Route”
RIMSKY-KORSAKOV Procession of the Nobles, from Mlada
GROFÉ Sunrise, from Grand Canyon Suite
BRITTEN Four Sea Interludes: Storm, from Peter Grimes
ROSSINI Overture to William Tell
ELGAR Nimrod, from the Enigma Variations
David DZUBAY Ra!
RESPIGHI Pines of the Appian Way, from Pines of Rome
SIBELIUS First movement (Allegro moderato), from Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47
(March 28, 10 a.m. concert only)

FAMILY CONCERTS

Saturday, March 30, 10 a.m. & 12 noon
Boston Symphony Orchestra
Thomas Wilkins, conductor
“Rule No. 1: Always Take the Scenic Route”
RIMSKY-KORSAKOV Procession of the Nobles, from Mlada
GROFÉ Sunrise, from Grand Canyon Suite
BRITTEN Four Sea Interludes: Storm, from Peter Grimes
ROSSINI Overture to William Tell
ELGAR Nimrod, from the Enigma Variations
David DZUBAY Ra!
RESPIGHI Pines of the Appian Way, from Pines of Rome