2020-21 BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA SEASON ANNOUNCEMENT;
SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE AS OF MAY 11 BY CALLING 888-266-1200 OR VISITING WWW.BSO.ORG; SINGLE TICKETS GO ON SALE IN AUGUST

EMBARGOED FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 3 P.M. EST

Important Message: The Boston Symphony Orchestra acknowledges the ongoing uncertainty around the COVID-19 health crisis and the lack of clarity regarding the duration of the pandemic. Though the BSO is announcing its usual full complement of performances for its 2020-21 Symphony Hall season and hopes the season will proceed without interruption, the organization is prepared to respond to all recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the City of Boston, should circumstances necessitate changes to its performance schedule or to its current health and safety policies. Should the BSO need to cancel or change elements of the season as outlined in this press release, the organization will communicate about those changes in a timely manner with all its patrons and the greater music community. In addition, ticket holders would be notified about options for ticket donations, exchanges, or refunds. The Boston Symphony Orchestra will always hold the health and well-being of its audience, musicians, staff, guest artists, and the entire BSO community as the highest priority in its decision-making regarding the organization’s performance and event schedule.

2020-21 BSO SEASON AND THE BSO COMMUNITY:
THE BSO AND ANDRIS NELSONS GREATLY ANTICIPATE REUNITING WITH THEIR MUSIC-LOVING COMMUNITY AND BRINGING EVER-MORE PEOPLE TOGETHER TO EXPERIENCE THE BSO’S BEAUTY, POWER, WONDER, AND INSPIRATION—THE SINGULAR MUSICAL GIFTS THEY ARE SO EAGER TO SHARE WITH THEIR AUDIENCES
Click here for a video message from Boston Symphony Orchestra Music Director Andris Nelsons

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA’S 2020-21 SEASON AT SYMPHONY HALL, SEPTEMBER 16-MAY 1, OFFERS THE BSO COMMUNITY WIDE-RANGING PROGRAMS, HIGHLIGHTED BY MAJOR MUSICAL EVENTS, MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATIONS, 14 WORKS BY IMPORTANT COMPOSERS OF OUR TIME, 27 ARTIST DEBUTS, AND THE INTRODUCTION OF TLI IN BOSTON—AN ADULT LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT SERIES THAT SPOTLIGHTS THE FASCINATING STORIES BEHIND THE MUSIC-MAKING


BSO’S CELEBRATION OF THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF BEETHOVEN’S BIRTH BEGINS WITH THE SEPTEMBER 16 SEASON OPENER FEATURING LANG LANG PERFORMING PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 ON A PROGRAM WITH SYMPHONY NO. 1, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF ANDRIS NELSONS

TO HONOR GREATER BOSTON’S ESSENTIAL WORKERS DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS, BSO TO OFFER SPECIAL COMPLIMENTARY CONCERT NIGHTS AND A SEASON-LONG 50% TICKET DISCOUNT PROGRAM

CLICK HERE FOR A COMPLETE SEASON LISTING
CLICK HERE FOR A LISTING OF ANDRIS NELSONS’ CONCERTS
CLICK HERE FOR A LISTING OF 14 WORKS BY LIVING COMPOSERS OF OUR TIME
CLICK HERE FOR A LISTING OF 27 ARTISTS MAKING DEBUTS
CLICK HERE FOR THE 2020-21 SEASON PRESS KIT

BSO TITLED CONDUCTORS—THOMAS ADÈS, ANNA RAKITINA, THOMAS WILKINS—AND BELOVED GUEST ARTISTS IN SPECIAL APPEARANCES WITH THE BSO
Anna Rakitina, BSO Assistant Conductor, in her Symphony Hall debut, leading music of Thomas Adès, Rachmaninoff, and Elgar (11/24-28); Thomas Wilkins, BSO Artistic Advisor for Education and Community Engagement, leading works by Ellington, Gershwin, and Still in celebration of the Harlem Renaissance (1/28-30); Thomas Adès, BSO Artistic Partner, leading music of Prokofiev, Ravel, and Janáček, as well as a reprise of his highly acclaimed Concerto for Piano and Orchestra with Kirill Gerstein as soloist (2/11-13)

Pianist Mitsuko Uchida joining the BSO and Andris Nelsons for performances of Beethoven’s Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 3 (4/22-27)—the start of a three-year cycle of performances of the five concertos

Pianists Danil Trifonov (Prokofiev Piano Concerto No. 1, 1/7-12); Emanuel Ax (Mozart Piano Concerto No. 17, 2/25-3/2); Rudolf Buchbinder (Mozart Piano Concerto No. 20, 1/14-19); Paul Lewis (Mozart Piano Concerto No. 27, 3/25-26; 4/16&17); Yefim Bronfman (Scriabin’s Prometheus, The Poem of Fire, 4/29-5/1)

Violinists Augustin Hadelich (Britten Violin Concerto, 10/22-24) and Gil Shaham (Mozart Violin Concerto No. 2 and Arvo Pärt’s Fratres, 1/21-23); cellist Yo-Yo Ma (Strauss Romance and Haydn Cello Concerto No. 1, 3/21); vocalists Kristine Opolais, Brandon Jovanovich, and Sir Willard White (Shostakovich Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk, 4/6-10), and Renée Fleming (Kevin Puts The Brightness of Light)

Guest conductors Giancarlo Guerrero (Gorecki Symphony No. 3, Symphony of Sorrowful Songs, 11/5-7); Dima Slobodeniouk (Stravinsky complete Firebird and music of Mendelssohn, 11/12-17); Alan Gilbert (Nielsen Symphony No. 3, music of Bartók and Beethoven, 11/19-21); Herbert Blomstedt (Sibelius Symphony No. 4 and Mendelssohn Symphony No. 3, 3/4-6)

BSO TO PERFORM 14 WORKS BY IMPORTANT COMPOSERS OF OUR TIME INCLUDING AN ANDRIS NELSONS-LED AMERICAN PREMIERE BY SOFIA GUBAIDULINA AND WORLD PREMIERE BY JULIA ADOLPHE, AND THE REPRISE OF TWO MAJOR WORKS RECENTLY PREMIERED BY THE ORCHESTRA: KEVIN PUTS’S THE BRIGHTNESS OF LIGHT, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MR. NELSONS, AND THOMAS ADÈS’S PIANO CONCERTO WITH KIRILL GERSTEIN AS SOLOIST, UNDER THE COMPOSER’S DIRECTION

Venturing Beyond the Music Making: Multimedia Presentations and a Conversations and Insights Series

Programs with Multimedia Dimensions:

*Julia Wolfe’s Her Story (11/5-7), written in commemoration of the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, to feature scenic, lighting, and costume design elements by Anne Kauffman, Jeff Sugg, and Marion Talan
Kevin Puts’s *The Brightness of Light* (10/8–10), inspired by letters of iconic American artist Georgia O’Keeffe and her husband, the photographer and curator Alfred Stieglitz, with supertitles and projections designed by video artist Wendall Harrington

*Scriabin’s* *Prometheus, The Poem of Fire* (4/29–5/1), with the composer’s lighting design realized by Anna Gawboy and Justin Townsend

A Series of Creative and Insightful Conversations—TLI in Boston—Around the Following Programs:

*The BSO’s Beethoven 250th celebration* (9/16–10/3)
*Julia Wolfe’s Her Story* (11/5–7)
*Shostakovich’s Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (4/6–10)

TANGLEWOOD FESTIVAL CHORUS CONTINUES ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON CELEBRATION WITH PERFORMANCES OF MUSIC OF SHOSTAKOVICH AND, AS PART OF THE BSO’S BEETHOVEN 250TH CELEBRATION, THE NINTH SYMPHONY; [CLICK HERE FOR LISTING OF PROGRAMS WITH TFC](#)

2020-21 BSO Season Activities Outside of Symphony Hall

*BSO and Andris Nelsons* to perform their annual concert series in New York, highlighted by an April 14 performance of Shostakovich’s *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, as part of Carnegie Hall’s *Voices of Hope: Artists in Time of Oppression* Festival

*Andris Nelsons* and *BSO* to perform at many of Europe’s most prestigious music festivals, August 20–September 4, 2021

*The Boston Symphony Chamber Players*’ annual chamber music series at Jordan Hall in 2020-21 to include works by Marti Epstein, Sofia Gubaidulina, Jennifer Higdon, Elena Langer, Shulamit Ran, Michael Gandolfi, and Yehudi Wyner, as well as music of Bartók, Dvořák, Glinka, Hindemith, Mozart, and Shostakovich.

*Free Community Chamber Concerts*, featuring members of the BSO and local community music groups in churches and community centers throughout Greater Boston and beyond, to continue in 2020-21

BSO YOUTH AND FAMILY CONCERTS SERIES FEATURES THREE PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE 2020-21 SEASON, INCLUDING A PROGRAM LED BY BSO YOUTH AND FAMILY CONCERTS CONDUCTOR THOMAS WILKINS AND TWO PROGRAMS WITH THE BOSTON YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS: PERFORMANCES OF PROKOFIEV’S *PETER AND THE WOLF* WITH CONDUCTOR ADRIAN SLYWOTSKY AND A PROGRAM LED BY CONDUCTOR MARTA ŻURAD AND FEATURING MAGICIAN MATT ROBERTS

Popular Discounted Ticketing Programs and Casual Friday Concerts Returning in 2020-21; Free Community Chamber Music Programs
*Casual Fridays* continue for the seventh season, with pre- and post-concert receptions, spoken intros by BSO members, and real-time digital program notes available through innovative ConcertCue.

*BSO’s highly successful $25 tickets for people under 40*

*College Card and High School Card*

*Rush Tickets* program, offering significantly discounted tickets to concertgoers on the day of performances.

Subscriptions to the 2020–21 BSO season are available beginning at 10 a.m. on MAY 11 by calling 888-266-1200 or visiting www.bso.org; single tickets go on sale in AUGUST.

**BANK OF AMERICA IS THE LEAD SPONSOR OF THE 2020–21 BSO SEASON**

To view an online press kit with complete programs, concert listings, ticket information, photos, and artist bios, click here.

**A MESSAGE FROM BSO MUSIC DIRECTOR ANDRIS NELSONS**

“Dear Friends of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, with the world going through so much upheaval around the coronavirus, I find it absolutely essential to look toward the future when we will all gather again as a community around the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s magnificent music-making,” said BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons. “When I think about the BSO’s 2020-21 season and its wealth of inspiring programs, I realize once again what performing means to me and so many in our BSO family. I find myself so deeply appreciative and grateful to be a part of an orchestra that is at the heart of a relationship connecting such a wonderful circle of friends, supporters, and audience members, united by their love of the Boston Symphony. I look forward to the time when we will joyfully regain the many gifts our amazing orchestra is so happy to offer us. I hope that when you return to the BSO you will bring a friend or relative and help us expand our beautiful community that knows so well that music is indeed food for our souls! Until then, I continue to wish everyone affected by the virus—especially those who are sick and helping the sick—the very best, as they remain in our thoughts and in our hearts. I hope our wonderful community will continue to imagine a more joyous time when we will be together again deeply appreciating the BSO’s music-making in our lives.”

The 2020-21 **Boston Symphony Orchestra** season, September 16-May 1, has been specially programmed to offer the BSO’s most devoted audiences and newcomers alike a fascinating and wide-ranging spectrum of musical styles and periods—awe-inspiring works with an extraordinary potential to move us through their thrilling beauty, power, and brilliance. The BSO’s **Andris Nelsons-led Beethoven 250th celebration**—a complete cycle of the composer’s nine symphonies—will open the season on September 16, with **Lang Lang** performing Piano Concerto No. 2 on a program with Symphony No. 1. In another major moment of the season, Mr. Nelsons will lead concert performances of **Shostakovich’s** landmark opera **Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk**, continuing his and the orchestra’s ongoing Shostakovich performance and Grammy Award-winning recording cycle, and reaffirming Mr. Nelsons’ commitment to an opera presentation each season at Symphony Hall. These two major highlights of the BSO 2020-21 season will be accompanied by specially curated programs designed to go beyond the music-making with multi-layered perspectives that tell the fascinating stories behind the works being performed.
Fourteen works by major composers of our time and 27 artists making debuts receive a special emphasis and bring a dimension of newness and discovery in many of the programs that make up the 2020-21 BSO season. Works to be spotlighted include a world premiere by American composer Julia Adolphe, the American premiere of Sofia Gubaidulina's Prologue, for orchestra, and the reprise of a work recently premiered by the BSO, Kevin Puts’s The Brightness of Light, with Renée Fleming and Rod Gilfry, all under the direction of Andris Nelsons. Adding an enhanced dramatic layer to the season will be the presentation of many large-scale works—some of which will receive special multimedia treatments—including the Nelsons-led performances of Scriabin’s Prometheus, The Poem of Fire, to close the 2020-21 season April 29-May 1, and a recent work by Julia Wolfe, Her Story, written in commemoration of the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

BSO Programs with Andris Nelsons
Leading 14 of 24 weeks of BSO programming in 2020-21, Andris Nelsons opens the season on September 16 with the launch of the BSO’s Beethoven 250th celebration—a complete cycle of the composer’s nine symphonies performed in order on consecutive programs for the first time since Serge Koussevitzky did so in March 1927. This special Beethoven symphony cycle will take place over a two-and-half-week period, beginning with the Opening Night program of Symphony No. 1 and Piano Concerto No. 2 with Lang Lang on September 16, and ending on October 3 with Symphonies Nos. 8 and 9, the latter featuring an acclaimed roster of soloists and the Tanglewood Festival Chorus in the Ode to Joy finale, as part of the TFC’s 50th anniversary season in the 2020-21 season. Additional major works throughout the season under the direction of Mr. Nelsons include Stravinsky’s The Rite of Spring and Petrushka, Mahler’s Fifth Symphony, and six works by Richard Strauss, among them Don Juan, Death and Transfiguration, Romance for cello and orchestra with Yo-Yo Ma, and Four Last Songs, with Norwegian soprano Lise Davidsen in her BSO debut. In addition to Shostakovich’s Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk, the BSO and Mr. Nelsons will continue their Grammy-Award winning recording and performance cycle with Shostakovich Symphonies Nos. 3 and 13, Babi Yar, featuring the Tanglewood Festival Chorus. Click here for a complete listing of Mr. Nelsons’ programs with the BSO.

BSO Titled Conductors—Thomas Adès, Anna Rakitina, and Thomas Wilkins—and Special Guest Artists
Thomas Adès, BSO Artistic Partner, leads a reprise of his Concerto for Piano and Orchestra with Kirill Gerstein, following its highly acclaimed world premiere performances in 2019 and the subsequent live recording release from those performances on Deutsche Grammophon in March. Anna Rakitina, BSO Assistant Conductor in her Symphony Hall debut, leads music of Thomas Adès, Rachmaninoff, and Elgar, and Thomas Wilkins, BSO Artistic Advisor for Education and Community Engagement, leads works by Ellington, Gershwin, and Still in celebration of the Harlem Renaissance. Guest conductors include Giancarlo Guerrero (Górecki Symphony No. 3, Symphony of Sorrowful Songs); Alan Gilbert (Nielsen Symphony No. 3); and Herbert Blomstedt (Sibelius and Mendelssohn). The BSO 2020-21 season also boasts appearances by some of the most popular guest artists of our time, including Mitsuko Uchida, who will begin a three-year cycle of the five Beethoven piano concertos with the BSO and Mr. Nelsons, starting with the First and Third concertos. Other preeminent guest artists include pianists Emanuel Ax, Yefim Bronfman, Rudolf Buchbinder, Paul Lewis, and Daniil Trifonov; violinists Augustin Hadelich and Gil Shaham, and vocalists Kristine Opolais, Brandon Jovanovich, and Sir Willard White.

27 Debuts and 14 Work by Composers of our Time
The 2020-21 BSO season will see the debuts of 27 guest artists, including the BSO debut of Russian bass Ildar Abdrazakov (Shostakovich Symphony No. 13, Babi Yar); Argentinian cellist Sol Gabetta (Martinů Cello Concerto No. 1); American soprano Amanda Majeski (Beethoven Symphony No. 9); and Finnish conductor Klaus Mäkelä, (works of Sibelius and Brett Dean); as well as the Symphony Hall subscription
The debut of American/Israeli pianist Inon Barnatan (Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 2). In addition to Julia Adolphe, Sofia Gubaidulina, Kevin Puts, Thomas Adès, and Julia Wolfe, referenced above, other composers to be featured in 2020-21 include Victoria Borisova-Ollas, Brett Dean, Bernard Rands, and Outi Tarkiainen. In addition, Andris Nelsons will lead works by Detlev Glanert, Brian Raphael Nabors, Arvo Pärt, and Joan Tower.

CLICK HERE FOR A LISTING OF 14 WORKS BY LIVING COMPOSERS OF OUR TIME
CLICK HERE FOR A LISTING OF 27 ARTISTS MAKING DEBUTS

Casual Fridays and Discounted Ticket Programs; BSO Community Chamber Concerts, and BSO Youth and Family Concerts

“Casual Fridays” will continue in 2020–21 with Friday-evening programs designed to make concerts more affordable and accessible, including free pre- and post-concert receptions for all concertgoers, and an opportunity for audience members to hear from BSO musicians who introduce the program from the Symphony Hall stage. This popular series also features a special section for Conductor-Cam seating, which allows patrons in that section to view the conductor from the orchestra’s perspective, as well as ConcertCue, which presents contextual program notes and images on concertgoers’ mobile devices in real-time during the musical performance. In addition, the BSO’s highly successful $25 tickets for patrons under the age of 40, College Card, High School Card, and Rush Ticket programs—all offering significantly discounted tickets for concertgoers—will continue in the 2020–21 season.

The BSO is pleased to present another season of Community Chamber Concerts featuring members of the BSO performing in various community venues throughout Greater Boston and beyond; these programs frequently also include performances by young local musicians. In addition, “Trading Stages,” recently introduced and continuing in 2020–21, invites student groups from host communities to perform at BSO events at Symphony Hall and Tanglewood throughout the year (details of both programs will be announced at a later date). The BSO will also present its annual Youth and Family Concert Series, featuring three programs throughout the 2020-21 BSO season, including a program led by BSO Artistic Advisor for Education and Community Engagement Thomas Wilkins. This series will also include two programs featuring the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras: Prokofiev’s Peter and the Wolf with conductor Adrian Slywotsky and a program featuring magician Matt Roberts, led by conductor Marta Żurad.

Additional Information About the Ongoing COVID-19 Health Crisis

Patrons can contact the BSO’s Customer Service Department at customerservice@bso.org or 617-266-1200 any time to register questions they might have relating to programming, ticket purchasing, or the organization’s adherence to official recommendations about COVID-19 in relation to its fall programming. For the most up-to-date information about the orchestra’s performance schedule patrons can visit www.bso.org. The Boston Symphony Orchestra will always hold the health and well-being of its audience, musicians, staff, guest artists, and the entire BSO community as the highest priority in its decision-making regarding the organization’s performance and event schedule.

In honor of Greater Boston’s essential workers during the COVID-19 crisis, the Boston Symphony Orchestra will offer special complimentary concert nights and a season-long 50% ticket discount offer (subject to ticket availability). Further details on these offers will be available at www.bso.org in the coming months.

The BSO at Symphony Hall, Tanglewood, Carnegie Hall, and on tour in Europe
The Boston Symphony Orchestra, founded by Henry Lee Higginson in 1881, performs late September through early May in internationally acclaimed Symphony Hall (301 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA), which opened in 1900 and is widely regarded as one of the top three concert halls in the world. The orchestra’s summer season takes place at Tanglewood—this country’s preeminent music festival and the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra since 1937—located in the Berkshire Hills between Stockbridge and Lenox, MA. Details of the 2020 Tanglewood season are available at www.tanglewood.org; details about the second season of the Tanglewood Learning Institute and the Linde Center for Music and Learning are available at www.tli.org. The BSO performs an annual concert series at New York’s Carnegie Hall and tours regularly to the world’s cultural capitals throughout Europe and Asia.

Bank of America is the Lead Sponsor of the 2020–21 BSO season. “Our support of the arts engages individuals, organizations, and cultures in creative ways to help build mutual respect and insight,” said Miceal Chamberlain, Massachusetts President, Bank of America. “By investing in the arts, we help create experiences that challenge, educate, inspire, and motivate. We hope audiences share in our passion and enthusiasm for the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s 2020–21 season.”

OVERVIEW OF BSO 2020–21 SEASON:
FURTHER DETAILS ON BOSTON SYMPHONY CONCERTS

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020–21 BSO SEASON UNDER THE DIRECTION OF ANDRIS NELSONS
The BSO offers multiple programs in the 2020–21 season to mark the 250th anniversary of Ludwig van Beethoven’s birth, beginning with an all-Beethoven Opening Night concert (9/16). Renowned pianist Lang Lang returns to Symphony Hall for the Piano Concerto No. 2 on a program that opens with the Symphony No. 1. The next two-and-a-half weeks are devoted to performances led by Mr. Nelsons of all the Beethoven symphonies performed in order: Nos. 1 and 2, plus The Consecration of the House overture (9/17), Nos. 2 and 3 (9/19&22), Nos. 4 and 5 (9/24&25), Nos. 6 and 7 (9/26&29), and Nos. 8 and 9 (10/1,2,3). The performances of the Ninth Symphony feature soloists Amanda Majeski, Tamara Mumford, Pavel Černoch, and Kwangchul Youn, along with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, James Burton, conductor. Beethoven holds a special place in the hearts of the BSO community, as his is the only composer name to be found in Symphony Hall, inscribed in the central position of the stage’s proscenium arch. When the concert hall was being designed and constructed, the directors intended to memorialize the names of great composers in plaques lining the proscenium arch and balconies’ fronts. In the end, however, the only composer they could all agree upon was Beethoven, whose name appears in the central position at the top of the proscenium, symbolically overseeing all performances taking place on the Symphony Hall stage.
Also in October, Mr. Nelsons leads a program featuring the Love Scene from Strauss’s *Feuersnot*, Detlev Glanert’s Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra with BSO principal Thomas Rolfs as soloist, and Kevin Puts’s *The Brightness of Light* with soprano Renée Fleming and baritone Rod Gilfrey (10/8,9,10). The following week Mr. Nelsons leads the American premiere of Sofia Gubaidulina’s *Prologue*, for orchestra (a BSO co-commission) and, continuing the orchestra’s ongoing Shostakovich cycle, the Symphony No. 13, *Babi Yar*, featuring bass Ildar Abdrazakov and men of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus and New England Conservatory Chorus (10/15,16,17,20). To round out his October concerts, Mr. Nelsons leads the BSO in Haydn’s Symphony No. 26, *Lamentatione*, Britten’s Violin Concerto with Augustin Hadelich as soloist, and Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring* (10/22,23,24).

Mr. Nelsons returns to the podium in January 2021 for a concert featuring Brian Raphael Nabors’s *Pulse*, Prokofiev’s Piano Concerto No. 1 with Danil Trifonov as soloist, and Holst’s *The Planets* with women of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus (1/7,8,9,12). The following week Rudolf Buchbinder is soloist in Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor on a program also featuring Mahler’s Symphony No. 5 (1/14,15,16,19). For his final January concerts, Mr. Nelsons leads Haydn’s *Te Deum* featuring the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, Mozart’s Violin Concerto No. 2 with Gil Shaham as soloist, and Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 3, *The First of May*, which also features the chorus and continues the Andris Nelsons/BSO Shostakovich project (1/21,22,23).

In mid-March Andris Nelsons returns with multiple programs to close the BSO’s 2020-21 season, beginning with an all-Strauss program (*Don Juan, Death and Transfiguration*, the Symphonic Fantasy from *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and, with soprano Lise Davidsen, the Four Last Songs) that continues the orchestra’s exploration of the composer’s works (3/18,19,20,23). A special Sunday non-subscription matinee concert (3/21) features Yo-Yo Ma performing Haydn’s Cello Concerto No. 1 and Strauss’s *Death and Transfiguration* on a program with the Symphonic Fantasy from Strauss’s *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and his *Death and Transfiguration*. The final March program opens with the world premiere of a new work, a BSO co-commission, by young American composer Julia Adolphe and continues with Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 27 with Paul Lewis as soloist, and Dvořák’s Symphony No. 7 (3/25 &26).

April brings the now annual BSO opera performance led by Mr. Nelsons. The most ambitious single endeavor in the BSO and Andris Nelsons’ multi-year Shostakovich survey, the opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* was also an immense undertaking for its twenty-four-year-old composer. Celebrated soprano Kristine Opolais sings the leading role in this dark portrayal of Katarina Izmailova, the oppressed, ambitious, and ultimately murderous wife of a provincial merchant. *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* became a worldwide sensation following its 1934 premiere, but it also led to the first major crisis between Shostakovich and Joseph Stalin’s oppressive regime. The enormous cast also includes Brandon Jovanovich as Sergei, Sergei Skorokhodov as Zinovy Izmailov, Vladimir Vaneyev as Boris Izmailov, and Sir Willard White as the Old Convict. Following a mid-April repeat of the Adolphe-Mozart-Dvořák program (4/16-17), the penultimate concert of the season includes Joan Tower’s *Chamber Dance*, and a pair of Beethoven piano concertos, Nos. 1 and 3, with soloist Mitsuko Uchida (4/22,23,24,27). The season-closing concerts feature several Russian works composed during the period 1909-11: Stravinsky’s *Petrushka*, Liadov’s *The Enchanted Lake* and *Kikimora*, and Scriabin’s *Prometheus, The Poem of Fire*, for piano, chorus, color organ, and orchestra, the latter featuring Yefim Bronfman as piano soloist and the Tanglewood Festival Chorus (4/28&30;5/1). The unusual Scriabin work also calls upon the talents of Anna Gawboy for lighting research and Justin Townsend as lighting designer for the color organ, an instrument designed specifically for performances of this tone poem.
BSO ARTISTIC PARTNER THOMAS ADÈS
On February 11–13, Thomas Adès, who continues as BSO’s Deborah and Philip Edmundson Artistic Partner, reprises with pianist Kirill Gerstein their highly acclaimed performances of Adès’ BSO-commissioned Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, premiered at Symphony Hall in February 2019. They have performed the piece dozens of times worldwide, and its BSO world premiere recording was issued on CD. Also in these concerts, Gerstein plays Ravel’s Piano Concerto for the Left Hand. Prokofiev’s seldom-performed Autumnal Sketch and Janáček’s Taras Bulba complete the program.

BSO ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR ANNA RAKITINA
Making her subscription series debut, BSO Assistant Conductor Anna Rakitina leads the orchestra in BSO Artistic Partner Thomas Adès’s colorfully evocative Polaris. The program continues with Rachmaninoff’s Second Piano Concerto, featuring Israeli-American virtuoso Inon Barnatan as soloist (a work which the composer himself played with the BSO on several occasions), and Elgar’s popular Enigma Variations (November 24–28).

BSO ARTISTIC ADVISOR FOR EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THOMAS WILKINS
For his second-ever set of subscription series concerts on January 28–30, BSO Artistic Advisor for Education and Community Engagement Thomas Wilkins leads two works by Duke Ellington, the folksong-influenced Symphony No. 4, Autochthonous by prominent African-American composer William Grant Still, and Gershwin’s rarely-heard Second Rhapsody with pianist Aaron Diehl. A sequel of sorts to Rhapsody in Blue, the Second Rhapsody was premiered by the BSO in 1932 with the composer as soloist.

RETURNING GUEST CONDUCTORS GIANCARLO GUERRERO, ALAN GILBERT, AND HERBERT BLOMSTEDT
Returning to the BSO stage are Giancarlo Guerrero who conducts Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Julia Wolfe’s Her Story, co-commissioned by the BSO and written for the Boston-based women’s vocal ensemble, the Lorelei Ensemble. The work, which marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, guaranteeing a woman’s right to vote, is paired with Henryk Górecki’s moving and plaintive Symphony No. 3, featuring Polish soprano Iwona Sobotka who makes her BSO debut (November 5–7). Former New York Philharmonic Music Director Alan Gilbert will lead the BSO in Bartók’s Piano Concerto No. 3 with soloist Garrick Ohlsson, Nielsen’s Third Symphony, and Beethoven’s Egmont Overture (November 19–21). Celebrating his 93rd birthday this summer, veteran conductor Herbert Blomstedt returns to conduct Mendelssohn’s Third Symphony (Scottish) and Sibelius’s Fourth Symphony (March 4–6).

In a program that also includes Mozart’s Symphony No. 35 (Haffner) and the celebratory Angelus by contemporary Russian-Swedish composer Victoria Borisova-Ollas, English conductor Andrew Manze and Russian-born British violinist Alina Ibragimova join the BSO for Brahms’s Violin Concerto (October 29–31). Following his successful Symphony Hall debut last October, Russian-born conductor Dima Slobodeniouk leads the orchestra in the complete ballet version of Stravinsky’s The Firebird and Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto, featuring esteemed German violinist Frank Peter Zimmermann as soloist (November 12–17). Finnish conductor John Storgårds is back to lead an intriguing program of works from Norway, Finland, and Czechoslovakia, including Sibelius’s Third Symphony and Martinů’s Cello Concerto with debuting artist Sol Gabetta (February 18–20). From February 25–27, Spanish conductor Juanjo Mena conducts the first BSO performances of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Bernard Rands’s Symphonic Fantasy, a BSO commission to be premiered by the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra in summer 2020, along with Brahms’ First Symphony and pianist Emanuel Ax in Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 17 in G, K.453.
Elsewhere in the season, Klaus Mäkelä, chief conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic, makes his BSO debut leading the Australian composer Brett Dean’s 2018 virtuosic Cello Concerto, written for German cellist Alban Gerhardt who will perform it. The program begins and ends with pieces by Mäkelä’s Finnish compatriot Jean Sibelius. The familiar tone poem The Swan of Tuonela is complemented by the composer’s First Symphony (February 4–6).

**BOSTON SYMPHONY CHAMBER PLAYERS 2020–21 SEASON**

The Boston Symphony Chamber Players open their 2020–21 season of four Sunday-afternoon concerts at New England Conservatory’s Jordan Hall on November 6 presenting works by contemporary composers Jennifer Higdon (Autumn Music for wind quintet), Marti Epstein (Komorebi for oboe, clarinet, and violin), Shulamit Ran (Lyre of Orpheus for string sextet), as well as Farrenc’s Nonet for winds and strings. Pianist Alessio Bax joins the Chamber Players on February 21 for a program of Bartók’s Contrasts for clarinet, violin, and piano, Michael Gandolfi’s Cantata, for soprano (Sophia Burgos), baritone (John Brancy), and ensemble, and Dvořák’s String Quintet in G, Op. 77. On March 28, the Chamber Players and guest pianist Inon Barnatan present a Russian-themed concert of music by contemporary composers Sofia Gubaidulina (Sonata for double bass and piano) and Elena Langer (Reflections on Water), in addition to Shostakovich’s Piano Quintet in G minor and Glinka’s Trio pathétique in D minor for clarinet, bassoon, and piano. To close the Boston Symphony Chamber Players’ 2020–21 season on April 25, the ensemble performs Hindemith’s Octet for winds and strings, Yehudi Wyner’s Concord-7 for flute, oboe, clarinet, violin, viola, cello, and piano, and Mozart’s String Quintet in D, K.593.

**THREE MULTIMEDIA PROGRAMS**

The use of multimedia and other theatrical elements is one of the most exciting and prominent themes of the BSO’s 2020–21 season. It begins October 8–10, with American composer Kevin Puts’s BSO-co-commissioned song cycle The Brightness of Light, celebrating the life of painter Georgia O’Keeffe. Accompanying the performance by BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons, soprano Renée Fleming, and baritone Rod Gilfry are projections designed by Wendall K. Harrington utilizing images from Ms. O’Keeffe’s life and art. The head of projection design at Yale University, Harrington is a sought-after video artist for Broadway, rock concerts, opera, ballet, and more. Stagecraft plays a sizable role in Her Story by the Pulitzer Prize-winning, New York-based composer Julia Wolfe, which receives Symphony Hall performances November 5, 6, and 7. Written for the Boston-based Lorelei Ensemble, the BSO co-commission marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guaranteed a woman’s right to vote. Obie Award-winning stage director Anne Kauffman (The Thugs, Marvin’s Room), scenic and lighting designer Jeff Sugg, and costume designer Márion Talán collaborate to bring the text and musical elements to life.

For the final subscription concert of the season from April 29 to May 1, BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons leads four highly colorful Russian works from the same era. In these concerts, special lighting design attempts to recreate Scriabin’s original conception for his 1910 multimedia symphony Prometheus, The Poem of Fire, which originally called for a “color organ” invented by the composer. The radiated colors correspond to, and are notated as part of, the music in Scriabin’s rich score, realized here by lighting researcher Anna Gawboy and lighting designer Justin Townsend. Opening the program is Stravinsky’s Petrushka (1911), a brilliant depiction of a life-sized puppet during a Russian Shrovetide Fair, followed by Anatoli Liadov’s contrasting, highly colorful tone poems The Enchanted Lake and Kikimora (both 1909), which were both frequently performed during Koussevitzky’s tenure as BSO music director.
A NEW ADULT EDUCATION INITIATIVE: TLI IN BOSTON
Since its inception in June 2019, the BSO’S Tanglewood Learning Institute (TLI) has presented more than 175 programs at the Linde Center for Music and Learning on the Tanglewood campus, offering multidisciplinary events and programs designed to inspire and engage curious minds. Building on that success, the BSO will expand this exceptional adult learning and engagement initiative to Boston this fall.

Inspired by the summer program, TLI in Boston will offer interdisciplinary programming that explores the theme of music and revolution in Beethoven and Shostakovich’s lifetimes and the role that music and musicians have played in support of human rights' movements throughout history and around the world. These TLI in Boston programs will shine a special spotlight on the BSO’s full cycle of Beethoven symphonies performed in the fall (September 16–October 3); concert performances of Shostakovich's opera, Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk (April 6–10) and the complete symphonies of Shostakovich, performed by the BSO over the course of the past several years and concluding in spring 2021 with performances of his third symphony (January 21–23); and performances of Julia Wolfe’s Her Story, in honor of the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution (November 5–7). Further details for TLI Boston programming will be posted on tli.org and bso.org in the coming months.

TANGLEWOOD FESTIVAL CHORUS CELEBRATES ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON
The Tanglewood Festival Chorus continues its 50th anniversary celebration throughout the fall of the BSO 2020-2021 season. The TFC, along with soprano Amanda Majeski, mezzo-soprano Tamara Mumford, tenor Pavel Černoch, and bass Kwangchul Youn, will join the BSO to perform Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony (October 1-3) for the first time in Symphony Hall since 2012, under the baton of BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons. These performances will mark the culmination of a full cycle of Beethoven's symphonies conducted by Andris Nelsons in honor of the 250th anniversary of the composer’s birth. In addition to the scheduled evening and afternoon performances of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, the TFC will also participate in the first high school open rehearsal of the season on the morning of October 1.

In October, the bass section of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus will perform alongside members of the bass section of the New England Conservatory Chorus with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Shostakovich’s monumental Symphony No. 13, Babi Yar (October 15-20), under the baton of Andris Nelsons as part of the BSO’s ongoing survey of the orchestral music of Shostakovich, being recorded by Deutsche Grammophon. Russian bass Ildar Abdrazakov makes his BSO debut on the program as soloist.

During the winter of 2021, the altos and sopranos of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus join forces with the BSO and Andris Nelsons for a performance of Holst’s The Planets (January 7-12), not heard at Symphony Hall since 2016. The program also features preeminent pianist Daniil Trifonov performing Prokofiev’s Piano Concerto No. 1 and Brian Raphael Nabors’s Pulse.

The BSO’s multi-season Shostakovich symphony cycle concludes with performances of the composer’s rarely heard Symphony No. 3, The First of May (January 21-23), featuring the TFC. In what is sure to be a highlight of the 2020-2021 season, the TFC will join an internationally renowned cast in the BSO’s presentation of Shostakovich’s Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk, which the orchestra and chorus will also present at Carnegie Hall in spring 2021 as part of Carnegie Hall’s Voices of Hope festival.

The last program of the BSO’s 2020-2021 season will include the TFC as well, with Andris Nelsons conducting Scriabin’s Prometheus, The Poem of Fire, for piano, chorus, color organ, and orchestra (April
29-30, May 1). The program will feature lighting design by Justin Townsend (*Jagged Little Pill, Moulin Rouge! The Musical!, Present Laughter*).

Originally formed under the joint sponsorship of Boston University and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the all-volunteer Tanglewood Festival Chorus was established in 1970 by its founding conductor, the late John Oliver, who stepped down from his leadership position with the TFC at the end of the 2015 Tanglewood season after 45 years. Though first established for performances at the BSO’s summer home, the Tanglewood Festival Chorus was soon playing a major role in the BSO’s subscription season as well as BSO concerts at Carnegie Hall; the ensemble now performs year-round with the Boston Symphony and Boston Pops. In February 2017, James Burton was named the new Conductor of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, also being appointed to the newly created position of BSO Choral Director. Mr. Burton is the Alan J. and Suzanne W. Dworsky BSO Choral Director and Conductor of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus.

**Ticket Information: Subscriptions on Sale on May 11; Single Tickets on sale in August**

Subscriptions for the BSO’s 2020-21 season will be available on May 11 at 10 a.m., by calling the BSO Subscription Office at 888-266-7575 or online through the BSO’s [website](#). Single tickets, starting at $30, will go on sale on in August. Tickets may be purchased by phone through SymphonyCharge (617-266-1200 or 888-266-1200), online through the BSO’s [website](#), 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.

American Express, MasterCard, Visa, Diners Club, and Discover (in person or by mail) and cash (in person only) are all accepted at the Symphony Hall Box Office. Gift certificates are available in any amount and may be used toward the purchase of tickets (subject to availability) to any Boston Symphony Orchestra or Boston Pops performance at Symphony Hall or Tanglewood. Gift certificates may also be used at the Symphony Shop to purchase merchandise.

Patrons with disabilities can access Symphony Hall through the Massachusetts Avenue lobby or the Cohen Wing on Huntington Avenue. An access service center, accessible restrooms, and elevators are available inside the Cohen Wing entrance. For ticket information, call the Access Services Administrator at 617-638-9431 or TDD/TTY 617-638-9289.

**Discounted Ticket Programs**
The BSO’s *$25 under 40* program allows patrons under the age of 40 to purchase tickets for $25 for most performances. Tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis on both the orchestra and balcony levels. There is a limit of one pair per performance, but patrons may attend as many performances as desired. Please note that blackout dates apply for this program, and “$25 under 40” can be suspended at any time for individual concerts, based on availability.

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. For only $30 (College Card) or $10 (High School Card), students can attend most BSO concerts at no additional cost by registering the card online to receive notifications of ticket availability.

A limited number of [Rush Tickets](#) for BSO subscription concerts on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and Friday afternoons are set aside to be sold on the day of a performance. These tickets are sold at $10
each, one to a customer, cash only, at the Symphony Hall Box Office. For Friday afternoon concerts, Rush Tickets are available beginning at 10 a.m. For Tuesday and Thursday evening concerts, Rush Tickets are available beginning at 5 p.m.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra offers groups advanced ticket reservations and flexible payment options for BSO concerts at Symphony Hall. Groups of 20 or more may take advantage of ticket discounts, backstage tours, clinics, and master classes. Pre- and post-concert dining options and private function space are available. More information is available through the group sales office.

Casual Fridays
This season will continue the popular Casual Fridays program, which encourages both patrons and the orchestra to come dressed in comfortable clothing. The four evening Casual Friday concerts, on October 9, November 20, January 29, and April 16, will feature both a pre-concert reception and post-concert reception. The post-concert reception will have live music until midnight. Each evening also features special Conductor Cam seating in the Tech Section. This allows patrons to watch the conductor from the orchestra’s perspective on high-definition screens. During the 2020-21 season, the BSO will also continue to offer concert attendees sitting in the Tech Section access to ConcertCue, an innovative app that presents contextual program notes and images on concert-goers’ mobile devices in real-time during the musical performance.

Additional Adult Education Initiatives

BSO 101 returns in 2020-21, again offering patrons the opportunity to increase their enjoyment of BSO concerts. These free Wednesday sessions with the BSO's Robert Kirzinger, joined by members of the orchestra or other guests, are designed to enhance the audience’s listening abilities and appreciation of music by focusing on the upcoming BSO repertoire. These sessions take place from 5:30-7 p.m. at Symphony Hall. In addition, each session is followed by a free half-hour tour of Symphony Hall. Dates and more information will be provided in patron subscription packages and at bso.org in the fall. RSVPs for the BSO 101 sessions will not be accepted until the fall. Full details of the 2020-21 BSO 101 schedule will be announced at a later date.

The popular Friday Preview talks continue to take place from 12:15–12:45 p.m. before each Friday-afternoon subscription concert; the Symphony Hall doors open at 11:30 a.m. Given by the BSO’s Robert Kirzinger and guest speakers from Boston's musical community, these informative half-hour talks incorporate recorded examples from the music to be performed. The BSO also offers talks from 9:30–10 a.m. before each of the season’s four Thursday-morning Open Rehearsals at Symphony Hall. The Symphony Hall doors open at 9 a.m., and the Open Rehearsal itself begins at 10:30 a.m. Admission to the Friday Preview Talks and Open Rehearsal Talks is free of charge to ticket holders for the Friday-afternoon subscription concerts and Thursday-morning Open Rehearsals.

Symphony Hall Shop and Tours
The Symphony Shop, located in the Cohen Wing on Huntington Avenue, is open Thursdays and Saturdays from 3 to 6 p.m., and from one hour before concert time through intermission. A satellite shop, located on the first-balcony level, is open during concerts through intermission. Merchandise may also be purchased by visiting the BSO website. The shop can be reached at 617-638-9383.

The Boston Symphony Association of Volunteers offers weekly public and private tours of Symphony Hall during the BSO season, on select weekdays at 4 p.m. and some Saturdays at 3:30 p.m. For more
information on taking an Irving W. and Charlotte F. Rabb Symphony Hall tour, please visit us at www.bso.org/tours.

Food Services at Symphony Hall
The Boston Symphony Orchestra’s catering partner, Boston Gourmet, offers a fresh perspective on the food and beverage options offered at Symphony Hall before concerts, during intermission, and in the popular Prelude Restaurant. Patrons enjoy the convenience of pre-concert dining at Prelude in the unique ambiance of historic Symphony Hall. Prelude offers a delicious three-course prix fixe menu with elegant entrees and sensational flavors. The restaurant is open for dinner from 5:30 p.m. until concert time for all evening concerts and is open for lunch at 11:00 a.m. prior to Friday afternoon concerts. Tables are available by reservation only, exclusively during Symphony season. Prelude is located in Higginson Hall, near the Cohen Wing entrance on Huntington Avenue. Please call 617-638-9328 for reservations.

Additionally, casual pre-concert and intermission dining is available for purchase at the snack bars outside the O’Block/Kay Room and the Cabot-Cahners Room. Light appetizers, entrees, desserts, and packages that feature an appetizer and a half-bottle of wine are available and can be pre-ordered on the BSO’s website. On the night of the concert, all pre-orders can be picked up at the Cabot-Cahners Room.

There are two lounges in Symphony Hall -- the O’Block/Kay Room on the orchestra level and the Cabot-Cahners Room on the first-balcony level. Both serve drinks starting one hour prior to each performance. For the Friday-afternoon concerts, both rooms open at 11:00 a.m., with sandwiches available until concert time.

BSO Media Offerings
Patrons can visit the BSO website at www.bso.org to access performance schedules, purchase tickets, order pre-performance food and beverages, download program notes, listen to radio broadcasts, podcasts, music clips and concert previews, watch video exclusives and make donations to the BSO. A special selection of musical content is also currently being curated on www.bso.org/athome.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra is on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and maintains a robust online presence on those channels and on YouTube.

Users can also purchase music produced and published under the BSO’s music label BSO Classics including performances by the BSO, Boston Pops, Boston Symphony Chamber Players, Tanglewood Festival Chorus, and Tanglewood Music Center Fellows. The BSO’s recent Grammy-winning albums from the Shostakovich cycle are also available at bso.org. Special thanks go to Lloyd Axelrod, M.D., for his support of the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s Shostakovich recording project.

Radio Broadcasts and Streaming
BSO concerts at Symphony Hall are broadcast regularly on 99.5 WCRB, a service of WGBH, and can be accessed at bso.org/broadcast. Saturday-evening concerts are broadcast live on 99.5 in Boston and 88.7 in Providence, on HD radio at 89.7 HD2 in Boston, and online at classicalwcrb.org, and are repeated at 8 p.m. on Monday evenings. In addition, BSO concerts from Tanglewood are heard on WCRB, as well as WAMC in Albany, NY; WMNR in Monroe, CT; and New England Public Radio.

Sponsorships
Longstanding major corporate partner Bank of America returns as the BSO Season Sponsor for the 2020-21 season.

The BSO is proud to announce that the Arbella Insurance Foundation, a longtime sponsor, is continuing its major sponsorship for the 15th season with its support of new audience development initiatives. The Foundation will once again sponsor the BSO College Card, Youth & Family Concerts, the BSO’s popular Casual Fridays series, and the BSO Young Professionals (YoPro) program.

Fairmont Copley Plaza begins its 19th season as the Official Hotel of the BSO.

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