BOSTON POPS INVITES JOHN WILLIAMS FANS TO SEND HAPPY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO MR. WILLIAMS ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 81ST BIRTHDAY, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8

FANS OF MR. WILLIAMS CAN SEND BIRTHDAY GREETINGS THROUGH WWW.TWITTER.COM/THEBOSTONPOPS OR LEAVE COMMENTS AT WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/THEBOSTONPOPS

BOSTON POPS ORCHESTRA CELEBRATES MR. WILLIAMS BIRTHDAY WITH THE FEBRUARY 8 RELEASE OF A NEW LIVE RECORDING OF THE COMPOSER’S OBOE CONCERTO, FEATURING BOSTON POPS PRINCIPAL OBOIST KEISUKE WAKAO

The Boston Pops Orchestra is inviting fans of John Williams to send happy birthday greetings to Mr. Williams on the occasion of his 81st birthday, Friday, February 8. Birthday greetings can be sent to Mr. Williams through www.twitter.com/thebostonpops or www.facebook.com/thebostonpops.

In celebration of Boston Pops Laureate Conductor John Williams’s 81st birthday the Boston Pops is releasing a new live recording of the composer’s Oboe Concerto at bostonpops.org. Written for principal Pops oboist Keisuke Wakao, the Oboe Concerto is the latest John Williams work to showcase the talented musicians of the Boston Symphony and Boston Pops. The recording took place during the world premiere performance of the work at a Boston Pops concert at Symphony Hall on May 25, 2011. The concerto’s three movements—Prelude, Pastorale, and Commedia—run approximately 19 minutes in length. Access to a press download of the Oboe Concerto for review and broadcast purposes is available by visiting www.bostonpops.org/oboeconcertopress and filling out the online form. To download photos from the world premiere performance of the oboe concerto, click here.
The concert recording will be available for download on bso.org, iTunes, and Amazon.com. The three-movement work is available in WMA stereo, AIFF stereo, 48khz/24Bit FLAC, and MP3 320kbs formats. An MP3 of the Oboe Concerto will be available for $2.99, while higher definition FLAC, AIFF and WMA formats of the work will cost $3.49. Individual tracks will range from $.89-$1.81 depending on the duration of the track and the format.

DIRECTIONS FOR REVIEWERS TO ACCESS DOWNLOAD OF JOHN WILLIAMS’S OBOE CONCERTO

Members of the press wanting to obtain press-only digital access to John Williams’s Oboe Concerto can visit www.bostonpops.org/oboecountopress for directions to create or access an already existing music account at www.bostonpops.org. An email confirmation will be sent when the requested subscription is ready; members of the press can then log in and access the Oboe Concerto via the purchase history section in their account. All requests will be fulfilled on the same business day they are received.

BOSTON POPS PERFORMANCES OF JOHN WILLIAMS’S OBOE CONCERTO

Maestro Williams led the world premiere performance of the concerto on May 25, 2011, at a Boston Pops concert in Symphony Hall. Mr. Wakao also performed the third movement of the Oboe Concerto at Tanglewood’s John Williams 80th Birthday Celebration on August 18, 2012, with former BSO assistant conductor Shi-Yeon Sung at the podium. Mr. Wakao and Mr. Williams previously collaborated in a performance of Mozart’s Oboe Concerto with the Boston Pops in 1994, and in 1998 Mr. Wakao released a CD featuring film music by John Williams, Keisuke Wakao Plays John Williams.

In addition to the Oboe Concerto, John Williams has composed a number of other concertos for BSO members, including On Willows and Birches (Concerto for Harp and Orchestra) (2009), written for BSO Principal harpist Ann Hobson Pilot in honor of her retirement from the BSO; Concerto for Viola and Orchestra (2009), written for Boston Pops principal violist Cathy Basrak; and Concerto for Tuba and Orchestra (1985), written for the Centennial of the Boston Pops and premiered by Chester Schmitz. Details about Mr. Williams’s other works for the concert stage are included in his bio that follows.

JOHN WILLIAMS

In a career spanning five decades, John Williams has become one of America’s most accomplished and successful composers for film and for the concert stage. He has served as music director and laureate conductor of one of the country’s treasured musical institutions, the Boston Pops Orchestra, and he maintains thriving artistic relationships with many of the world’s great orchestras. He remains one of our nation’s most distinguished and contributive musical voices.

Mr. Williams has composed the music and served as music director for more than 100 films. His nearly 40-year artistic partnership with director Steven Spielberg has resulted in many of Hollywood’s most acclaimed and successful films, including Schindler’s List, E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial, Jaws, Jurassic Park, Close Encounters of the Third Kind, the Indiana Jones films, Saving Private Ryan, Amistad, Munich, Hook, Catch Me If You Can, Minority Report, A.I. Artificial Intelligence, and Empire of the Sun. Their most recent collaborations, The Adventures of TinTin: The Secret of the Unicorn, and the WWI drama War Horse, were released in late 2011, and Lincoln was released in late 2012. Mr. Williams also composed
the scores for all six Star Wars films, the first three Harry Potter films, Superman, JFK, Born on the Fourth of July, Memoirs of a Geisha, Far and Away, The Accidental Tourist, Home Alone, Nixon, The Patriot, Angela’s Ashes, Seven Years in Tibet, The Witches of Eastwick, Rosewood, Sleepers, Sabrina, Presumed Innocent, The Cowboys, The Reivers, and Goodbye, Mr. Chips, among many others. He has worked with such legendary directors as Alfred Hitchcock, William Wyler, and Robert Altman. He adapted the score for the film version of Fiddler on the Roof, for which he composed original violin cadenzas for renowned virtuoso Isaac Stern. He has appeared on recordings as pianist and conductor with Itzhak Perlman, Joshua Bell, Jessye Norman, and others. Mr. Williams has received five Academy Awards and a total of forty-eight Oscar nominations, making him the Academy’s most-nominated living person. He also has received seven British Academy Awards (BAFTA), twenty-one Grammys, four Golden Globes, five Emmys, and numerous gold and platinum records.

A composition student of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Mr. Williams also studied piano at the Juilliard School with Madame Rosina Lhevinne. He began his career in the film industry working with such accomplished composers as Bernard Herrmann, Alfred Newman, and Franz Waxman. He went on to write music for more than 200 television films for the groundbreaking, early anthology series Alcoa Theatre, Kraft Television Theatre, Chrysler Theatre, and Playhouse 90. His more recent contributions to television music include themes for NBC Nightly News (“The Mission”), the theme for what has become network television’s longest-running series, NBC’s Meet the Press, and the prestigious PBS arts showcase Great Performances.

Mr. Williams has composed numerous works for the concert stage, among them two symphonies, and concertos for flute, oboe, violin, clarinet, viola, and tuba. His cello concerto was commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and premiered by Yo-Yo Ma at Tanglewood in 1994. Mr. Williams also has filled commissions by several of the world’s leading orchestras, including a bassoon concerto for the New York Philharmonic, a trumpet concerto for the Cleveland Orchestra, and a horn concerto for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. “Seven for Luck,” a seven-piece song cycle for soprano and orchestra based on texts by former U.S. Poet Laureate Rita Dove, was premiered by the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood in 1998. And at the opening concert of their 2009-10 season, James Levine led the Boston Symphony in the premiere of Mr. Williams’s “On Willows and Birches,” a new concerto for harp and orchestra.

In January 1980, Mr. Williams was named nineteenth conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra, succeeding the legendary Arthur Fiedler. He currently holds the title of Laureate Conductor, which he assumed following his retirement in December 1993, after fourteen highly successful seasons. He also holds the title of Artist-in-Residence at Tanglewood.

One of America’s best-known and most distinctive artistic voices, Mr. Williams has composed music for many important cultural and commemorative events, including “Liberty Fanfare” for the rededication of the Statue of Liberty in 1986, “American Journey” for the America’s Millennium concert in Washington, D.C., on New Year’s Eve 1999, and “Soundings” for the gala opening of Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. In the world of sport, he has contributed musical themes for the 1984, 1988, and 1996 Summer Olympic Games, and the 2002 Winter Olympic Games.

Mr. Williams holds honorary degrees from twenty-one American universities, including The Juilliard School, Boston College, Northeastern University, Tufts University, Boston University, the New England Conservatory of Music, the University of Massachusetts at Boston, The Eastman School of Music, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and the University of Southern California. He is a recipient of the 2009 National Medal of Arts, the highest award given to artists by the United States Government. In 2003 he received the Olympic Order, the IOC’s highest honor, for his contributions to the Olympic movement. He served as the Grand Marshal of the 2004 Rose Parade in Pasadena, and was a recipient of the Kennedy Center Honor in December 2004. In January 2009, Mr. Williams composed and arranged “Air and Simple Gifts” especially for the inaugural ceremony of President Barack Obama.
KEISUKE WAKAO

Keisuke Wakao was appointed assistant principal oboe of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and principal oboe of the Boston Pops Orchestra in fall 1990. He was previously a member of the New World Symphony from its 1988 inaugural season. A native of Tokyo, Mr. Wakao performed with the New Japan Philharmonic under Seiji Ozawa in 1985 and made his concerto debut with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra under Kazuyoshi Akiyama in summer 1989. He made his Tokyo recital debut in 1997 and performed with pianist Christoph Eschenbach in a recital at Sapporo’s 1998 Pacific Music Festival. Mr. Wakao received his performance diploma from Manhattan School of Music where he served on the faculty following his graduation in 1987. His teachers include former New York Philharmonic principal oboe Joseph Robinson at Manhattan School, and former Boston Symphony Orchestra principal Alfred Genovese and Ralph Gomberg at Tanglewood, where he was a TMC Fellow. A talented teacher himself, Mr. Wakao founded the annual Keisuke Wakao Oboe Camp in Tokyo in 1988 and is currently on the faculties of both the New England Conservatory and the Longy School of Music. He is also director of the Daikanyama Hillside Terrace Music Festival in Tokyo, founder of both the Church of the Redeemer Concerto Series in Chestnut Hill and the Ventfort Hall Summer Chamber Music Concert Series in Lenox, and sponsor of the American-Japanese Cultural Concert Series, which in 2010 featured performances with Emanuel Ax. Mr. Wakao has made three solo recordings on the Denon label, including *Abendlied* (1997) with pianist Christoph Eshenbach, and *Keisuke Wakao Plays John Williams* (1998), a disc featuring film music by John Williams, with whom Keisuke also collaborated in a performance of Mozart’s Oboe Concerto with the Boston Pops in 1994.

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