PROGRAM AND BROADCAST PLANS FOR
THE 42nd ANNUAL BOSTON POPS FIREWORKS SPECTACULAR,
SATURDAY, JULY 4, AT 8 P.M.; NEW PROGRAM AND BROADCAST
DETAILS NOTED BELOW

THE BOSTON POPS AND KEITH LOCKHART, CELEBRATING
HIS 20TH ANNIVERSARY LEADING THE FIREWORKS SPECTACULAR,
TO BE JOINED BY MICHAEL CAVANAUGH, MELINDA DOOLITTLE,
SONS OF SERENDIP, THE BOSTON CRUSADERS,
MICHELLE BROOKS-THOMPSON, AND THE USO SHOW TROUPE

NEW INFORMATION: FIRST-EVER “PICK THE POPS PLAYLIST” WILL GIVE
POTENTIAL AUDIENCE OF MORE THAN 500,000 A CHANCE TO CHOOSE SOME OF
THE SELECTIONS TO BE PERFORMED DURING THE EVENING’S PROGRAM

PERFORMANCE TO BE TELEVISED LIVE EXCLUSIVELY ON CBS BOSTON’S WBZ-TV
FROM 8 TO 11 P.M., WITH HOSTS DAVID WADE AND LISA HUGHES; LIVE
WEBCAST OF THE BOSTON POPS FIREWORKS SPECTACULAR WILL BE AVAILABLE
TO A NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ONLINE AUDIENCE STARTING AT 8 P.M. AT
WWW.BOSTONPOPSJULY4TH.ORG AND WWW.CBSBOSTON.COM

NEW INFORMATION: LIVE WEBCAST AVAILABLE ONLINE FOR THE FIRST TIME VIA
YAHOO! LIVE AT WWW.YAHOO.COM/LIVE/EVENT/BOSTON-POPS-FIREWORKS-
SPECTACULAR
2015 BOSTON POPS FIREWORKS SPECTACULAR IS SPONSORED BY
LIBERTY MUTUAL INSURANCE

Boston 4 Productions (B4), the Boston Pops, and CBS Boston's WBZ-TV present program and broadcast details for the 42nd annual Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular, featuring the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra under the direction of Keith Lockhart, who is celebrating his 20th anniversary as conductor of both the Pops and the annual July 4 concert on the Charles River Esplanade. The first-ever "Pick the Pops Playlist" will give a potential audience of more than 500,000 on the Esplanade, as well as WBZ-TV viewers at home, the opportunity to choose songs performed during the concert. The interactive ‘text-to-vote’ song selection will happen twice during the show. Also a first this year, Yahoo! Live will make the webcast available to a worldwide audience at www.yahoo.com/live/event/boston-pops-fireworks-spectacular. This year, Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops will be joined by a varied line-up of performers, including Broadway performer Michael Cavanaugh; American Idol finalist Melinda Doolittle; Boston-based quartet, the Sons of Serendip; the Boston Crusaders drum and bugle corps; gospel singer and The Voice contestant Michelle Brooks-Thompson, and the USO Show Troupe.

BOSTON POPS FIREWORKS SPECTACULAR TO BE FEATURED IN LIVE BROADCAST ON WBZ-TV AND AS A WEBCAST AT www.BostonPopsJuly4th.org, www.cbsboston.com and also for the first time via Yahoo! Live at www.yahoo.com/live/event/boston-pops-fireworks-spectacular. The Boston Pops’ Fourth-of-July concert at the DCR Hatch Shell on Boston’s Charles River Esplanade, Saturday, July 4, 8 p.m., will also be televised live exclusively on CBS Boston’s WBZ-TV from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. Following last year’s first-ever live webcast of the event, which reached an international audience of over 1.4 million viewers, the Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular will stream live online at www.BostonPopsJuly4th.org, www.cbsboston.com and www.yahoo.com/live/event/boston-pops-fireworks-spectacular, bringing Boston’s famous July 4 celebration once again to a worldwide audience.

This year’s program will be hosted by WBZ-TV News anchors Lisa Hughes and David Wade and will feature members of WBZ-TV News: WBZ-TV evening anchors Liam Martin and Paula Ebben, Chief Meteorologist Eric Fisher, and Sports Director Steve Burton. It will also air locally on WBZ NewsRadio 1030 AM hosted by Jordan Rich and WBZ's morning news anchor Joe Mathieu beginning at 7p.m. WBZ NewsRadio 1030 will also stream the entire event live on CBSBoston.com. Additionally, the audio of the broadcast can be heard live on the FM dial on 99.5 WCRB, WGBH's listener-supported classical radio station beginning at 8:00p.m. with Ron Della Chiesa and Laura Carlo.
NEW “PICK THE POPS PLAYLIST” WILL GIVE AUDIENCE MEMBERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN SONG SELECTION DURING THE BOSTON POPS FIREWORKS SPECTACULAR

During this year’s Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular concert, audience members on the Esplanade, as well as viewers watching the broadcast on WBZ-TV, will have the opportunity to participate in the song selection for the show. The first-ever interactive ‘text-to-vote’ song selection will take place twice during the concert. Audience members will text a key word for the song of their choice to 84816. Viewers at home and patrons on the Esplanade will see key words for each song selection on a graphic that will air during the broadcast, as well as on the Jumbotron screens on-site. The voting results will be automatically tallied in real time and results will appear on screen, and will be announced by Keith Lockhart. Standard text messaging rates apply to each text message sent or received as provided by your wireless rate plan.

"There are few concerts that I’ve conducted that come close to the thrill of leading the Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular for the greater Boston community and visitors hailing from far and wide, all of whom gather together on the Esplanade to celebrate one of our nation’s most important holidays,” said Boston Pops Conductor Keith Lockhart. “Though this will be my 20th Fireworks Spectacular, it remains absolutely inspiring to see and hear the crowd’s terrific response to our great Pops traditions—the 1812 Overture, the Stars and Stripes, and the annual Patriotic sing-along, as well as to the many extraordinarily talented guest artists who grace the Esplanade stage each year—this year including Michael Cavanaugh, Melinda Doolittle, Sons of Serendip, the Boston Crusaders, Michelle Brooks-Thompson, and the USO Show Troop."

“We are happy to once again partner with WBZ-TV for the broadcast of The Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular and provide viewers a chance to celebrate at home with us on the Esplanade! This is a treasured event for the City of Boston and we hope the tradition can continue,” said Executive Producer David G. Mugar.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS OF 2015 BOSTON POPS FIREWORKS SPECTACULAR

In addition to the aforementioned lineup of guest artists, this year’s Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular will feature several of the event’s treasured traditions including the Pops’ now classic Independence Day rendition of Tchaikovsky’s 1812 Overture, which features real cannons, the live ringing of area church bells, and fireworks. Also on the program is The Stars and Stripes Forever, which includes the ceremonial American flag drop and confetti shot. The Spectacular will be capped off by a magnificent fireworks array that fills the skies above Boston with a stunning exhibition of color and breathtaking pageantry. The family-owned and -operated Fireworks by Grucci, known as “America's First Family of Fireworks,” are honored to
produce this year’s performance. The Gruccis, now in their 6th generation, have transformed the night skies to the delight of millions across the globe since 1850.

**ARTIST DETAILS FOR BOSTON POPS FIREWORKS SPECTACULAR PROGRAM**

**Michael Cavanaugh** is the new voice of the American rock & roll songbook. A charismatic performer, musician and actor, made famous for his piano/lead vocals in the Broadway Musical *Movin’ Out*. He was handpicked by Billy Joel to star in title role and evokes a style rivaling the Piano Man. Michael appeared in the show for 3 years and over 1200 performances, receiving accolade after accolade, which culminated in 2003 with both Grammy and Tony award nominations. Michael began playing at age 7, when his parents bought their first piano. In January of 1999, Michael received an offer to play Las Vegas at the famed “New York, New York Hotel and Casino.” It was there that Billy Joel spotted Michael and joined him on stage. At the end of 2005, Michael began touring in his own right, creating a show that reinterprets the modern pop/rock songbook. In October 2008, he signed with Warner/ADA to distribute his first CD titled “In Color.” In June, 2010, Michael debuted his second symphony show in the “Generations of Rock” series entitled “Michael Cavanaugh: The Songs of Elton John and more” and then debuted his third symphony show “Singers and Songwriters: the music of Paul Simon, Neil Diamond and James Taylor” in 2012. He continues to tour all three symphony productions.

**Melinda Doolittle** became a household name on season six of *American Idol*. She carved out a niche in the Nashville music scene, singing background for musical legends such as Michael McDonald, Aretha Franklin, and Aaron Neville, before finishing third on the sixth season of *American Idol* in 2007. Her debut album, *Coming Back to You* (2009), garnered rave reviews from critics, including The New York Times, which hailed Melinda as one of the most “phenomenally gifted” singers in years. Since her time on *Idol*, Melinda has wowed audiences everywhere from the White House to the Musicians Hall of Fame, from the Kennedy Center to Carnegie Hall. She has gone on to share the stage with some of the very artists for whom she sang background as well as music luminaries such as Peter Cetera, Cyndi Lauper, and the renowned Boston Pops Orchestra. In 2013 alone, Melinda was featured on 5 studio albums, including her sophomore release *You’re The Reason*.

The **Sons of Serendip** is a musical group of four friends, who through a series of serendipitous events, came together in graduate school at Boston University. Micah Christian, a former teacher from Randolph, MA, is the lead vocalist of the group; Cordaro Rodriguez, a former attorney from Charlotte, NC, is the pianist and guitarist; Kendall Ramseur, a performer, cello instructor and former grocery clerk from Charlotte, NC, is the cellist and vocalist; and Mason Morton, formerly a teacher from Atlanta, GA, is the harpist for the quartet. They have each been playing their instruments since childhood, but recently, they came together to begin what they hope will be a long beautiful journey of creating music that touches people’s hearts. In 2014 the Sons of Serendip were finalists on *America’s Got Talent*. Their debut album was just released earlier this year and hit the billboard charts in 12 different categories including: Heatseekers - Northeast region at #1, Heatseekers - Mountain region at #2, Internet Album at
#14, Independent Album at #20, and Top Current Album. Look out for their new single “Firework” as well as their Christmas album, which will be released this November.

This year’s program will also include a performance by the **Boston Crusaders**. The Boston Crusaders celebrate their 75th Anniversary this year. Founded in 1940, its the third-oldest junior drum and bugle corps in the nation and is proud to be a founding member of Drum Corps International. The Boston Crusaders are comprised of 150 young women and men ages 15-22. Brass players, percussionists and color guard members travel over 10,000 miles each summer, performing in more than 40 competitions and exhibitions before a combined audience of over 300,000 fans. For more information on the Boston Crusaders please visit: [www.bostoncrusaders.org](http://www.bostoncrusaders.org).

Gospel recording artist **Michelle Brooks-Thompson** was born in Boston, MA. Michelle, a musical prodigy, started singing at an early age in the choir at her grandfather’s church and later in a trio group with her mother and aunt. She attended Mount Holyoke College and while there she founded the first Five Colleges Gospel Choir and formed the college’s own series of Gospel Explosion concerts. In 2006, she earned a B.A. in music with a concentration in Vocal Performance and piano with a minor in Religion. She was accepted into Boston’s Berklee College of Music for a Performance Diploma program to further her music studies, but she declined in order to independently pursue her professional music career. Since a teenager her vocal abilities have often been compared to that of the late great Whitney Houston. Her voice is leveled with some of the greatest and legendary gospel artists. Over the years she has sung backup for various gospel recording artists & opened shows for national contemporary Christian & Gospel recording artists. She has performed the National Anthem at Collegiate and professional sporting events including Fenway Park for the Boston Red Sox and at Gillette Stadium for the NFL New England Patriots 2014 AFC Game. In 2012, Michelle was a finalist on Season 3 of NBC’s *The Voice*. Currently, she is finalizing her first gospel EP entitled *My Life’s Testimony* featuring her already released single "He Will Do It." Her single "When I Think" is now available to stream via Soundcloud. For more information visit [http://michellebrooksthompsonmusic.com](http://michellebrooksthompsonmusic.com).

**USO Show Troupe** is part of an entertainment tradition that goes back more than seventy years to its beginnings in the muddy camp shows of the South Pacific. Today, the pride and passion that fueled that early music lives on through the USO Show Troupe. With over 350 live annual performances, the Troupe entertains approximately 600,000 troops and family members around the world. The USO Show Troupe is comprised of 56 professional performers possessing extensive Broadway and off-Broadway, credits, hailing from shows such as *Les Misérables*, *The Phantom of The Opera*, *Honeymoon in Vegas*, *West Side Story*, *A Chorus Line*, *Pippin*, *Sister Act*, and *Spiderman: Turn Off The Dark* to name a few. In addition to their patriotic performances the USO Show Troupe has appeared on *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*, *The Ellen Degeneres Show*, *FOX and Friends*, and *Dick Clark’s New Year’s Rocking Eve* with Ryan Seacrest. They have also performed with Katy Perry, Tim McGraw, Darius Rucker, Little Big Town, The Band Perry, Toby Keith, and Blake Shelton. Performances are produced in collaboration with award-winning writers, arrangers, and choreographers, and costumes by Broadway costume...
designers and internationally recognized fashion and costume designers. The group’s broad repertoire includes patriotic and big band favorites, music of the ‘50s, ‘60s, ‘70s, ‘80s, disco, Motown, country, Broadway, and current Top 40 hits.

The Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular will be televised exclusively on CBS Boston’s WBZ-TV from 8 p.m.-11 p.m.

The Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular is an annual, free outdoor concert at the DCR Hatch Shell on the Esplanade and is sponsored by Liberty Mutual Insurance, one of America’s leading insurers, offering auto, home, and life insurance for individuals and families, as well as a variety of insurance products and services for businesses. The final 20 minutes of the broadcast, featuring the spectacular fireworks display, will be presented commercial-free by Liberty Mutual Insurance.

The Boston Pops are on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TheBostonPops and on Twitter at www.twitter.com/TheBostonPops.

BOSTON POPS FIREWORKS SPECTACULAR

Friday, July 3, 2015
8:30 p.m. – 10 p.m.

Saturday, July 4, 2015
8 p.m. – 11 p.m. (10:30 p.m. fireworks)
Keith Lockhart, conductor
Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra
Michael Cavanaugh
Melinda Doolittle
Sons of Serendip
The Boston Crusaders
Michelle Brooks-Thompson
USO Show Troupe

PRESS CONTACTS:
Bernadette Horgan, Director of Public Relations (bhorgan@bso.org) 617-638-9285