



1776  2026

FIREWORKS SPECTACULAR

Embargoed until:

Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at 3:15 p.m.

**Boston Pops Announces Lainey Wilson, Chance The
Rapper, and Trombone Shorty as Special Guest Artists
at**

**2026 July 4 Fireworks Spectacular
Celebrating Massachusetts and America 250**

**Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops to Perform at the
Beloved Independence Day Concert on the Charles
River Esplanade**

**Also Joining the Pops on the Hatch Shell Stage are the
Boston Children's Chorus, Boston Crusaders Drum and
Bugle Corps, Middlesex County Volunteers Fifes and Drums,
Tanglewood Festival Chorus, and USS Constitution Color
Guard**

*The entire July 4 concert and fireworks display will be broadcast locally in
Boston on **WHDH-TV Channel 7** and streamed on the **CNN app and
CNN.com** (7:00-9:30 p.m. ET). Portions of the event including the*

fireworks also will be carried live on an international CNN broadcast of July 4/America 250 celebrations.



Visit the [Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular website](#) for complete event information, including resources to help you plan your trip and sponsors.

For a *Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular* press kit, [click here](#)

(Boston, MA) — The ***Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular*** returns to the Hatch Shell on the Charles River Esplanade for its 52nd year on Saturday, July 4, from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. ET. Led by legendary conductor **Keith Lockhart**, the Pops concert welcomes three very special guest artists: Grammy-winning country music superstar **Lainey Wilson**, three-time Grammy winner **Chance The Rapper**, and Grammy-winning NOLA icon **Trombone Shorty**, each making their first appearance with the Pops.

As the Signature Event of the Commonwealth's **MA250** (Massachusetts 250) initiative honoring the 250th anniversary of America's founding, this year's free July 4 concert anchors a multi-year, statewide commemoration highlighting

Massachusetts' legacy of leadership and innovation in shaping the nation's founding and future.

Governor Maura Healey and **Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll**, with support from the **Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT)**, established the MA250 Executive Committee to lead the statewide celebration. Chaired by **Bob Rivers of Eastern Bank**, the Committee brings together business, civic, and cultural leaders to drive engagement across Massachusetts. Working together, the Committee confirmed leadership support from MA250, Takeda Pharmaceuticals, Sanofi, Vertex Pharmaceuticals, and Dunkin' who, along with more than thirty other sponsors and partners, will ensure that the 2026 Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular will serve as one of the nation's largest July 4 celebrations. (Full Sponsor List Below)

With an all-American lineup of top-tier guest artists led by Wilson, Chance, and Shorty, a revolutionary-themed drone show during the performance of the *1812 Overture*, and a fireworks display choreographed to music by the Pops, the event will showcase Massachusetts' creativity, collaboration, and community spirit to an in-person audience expected to break attendance records and millions of broadcast viewers on **CNN** and on **WHDH-Channel 7**.

In honor of the 250th, this year's musical program features the world premieres of two new works by contemporary American composers. The first, commissioned by the Boston Pops, sets a poem entitled "Song of Massachusetts" written and performed by **Massachusetts Poet Laureate Regie Gibson** to a score by **BSO Composer Chair Carlos Simon**. The other, "Spirit of America," is composed by **James M. (Jim) Stephenson** in celebration of America 250 and includes reference to "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," "paying homage to those who came before us and who lived and died to protect the truths we hold self-evident," according to the composer's statement.

The in-person event also includes the screening of "We Declare," the winning video about the Declaration of Independence created by 8th grade students as part of a statewide civics competition presented by iCivics ([more info](#)). The winning students will be introduced at the show.

As always, the free concert includes a patriotic singalong and other Independence Day favorites performed by the Pops along with the **Boston Children's Chorus**, **Boston Crusaders Drum and Bugle Corps**, **Middlesex County Volunteers Fifes and Drums**, **Tanglewood Festival Chorus**, and the **USS Constitution**

Color Guard. We also welcome a talented young pianist from Berklee College of Music: **Pelin Su Yavuz**, who was one of the winners of our annual Fidelity Investments Young Artists Competition in 2024.

The event will conclude with a stunning fireworks display illuminating the Charles River and choreographed with music performed by the Boston Pops, beginning at 9:15 p.m.

The entire July 4 concert and fireworks display will be broadcast locally in Boston on **WHDH-TV Channel 7** and streamed on the **CNN app and CNN.com** (7:00-9:30 p.m. ET). Portions of the event including the fireworks also will be carried live on an international CNN broadcast of July 4/America 250 celebrations.

Public access to the Oval lawn in front of the Hatch Shell opens at 12 p.m. Throughout the afternoon, the Esplanade will offer a variety of concessions and activities for all ages. These include a collaboration with The LEGO Group to assemble a giant American Flag with the help of onsite attendees and advance support from four Massachusetts libraries in Methuen, New Bedford, Pittsfield, and Worcester who will work during the month of June to pre-build blocks that will be transported to the Esplanade for the project. [\[More Info\]](#)

Statement from Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey:

“Massachusetts is where the American Revolution began, and this July 4, we’re proud to welcome people from across the state and country to celebrate 250 years of our nation’s history right here in Boston. From the incredible lineup of artists including the Boston Pops and fireworks over the Charles River, this year’s Spectacular will honor our past while celebrating the energy, creativity and diversity that define Massachusetts today. We’re excited to share this special moment with millions of people here in Boston and watching around the world.”

Statement from Boston Mayor Michelle Wu:

“This year’s Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular will be an unforgettable celebration for our residents and visitors from around the world, honoring Boston’s revolutionary history, the courage of our communities, and the traditions that bring us together. Boston’s July 4th festivities are a cherished opportunity for friends and family to come together in celebration. We are proud to host this iconic event and to provide a memorable experience for all.”

Statement from Bob Rivers, Chair of the MA250 Executive Committee and Eastern Bank Executive Chair and Chair of the Board of Directors:

“As we celebrate America’s 250th birthday, this year’s *Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular* is shaping up to be exactly that—spectacular. We thank the Commonwealth’s business, nonprofit, and community leaders, sponsors and partners for their collaboration in helping to make this event possible, where everyone can enjoy one of the nation’s largest Independence Day celebrations from right here in Massachusetts.”

Statement from Keith Lockhart, Boston Pops Conductor:

“Back in 1976, Boston celebrated America’s Bicentennial with the great Arthur Fiedler leading the Boston Pops on the Esplanade, breaking records for live attendance and national TV viewership and establishing Boston as the place to celebrate Independence Day. A half century has passed and, after 30 years of leading the Pops’ July 4 Fireworks Spectacular event myself, I am especially excited about what we have planned this year to celebrate the Commonwealth’s revolutionary history and America’s 250th. I’m thrilled to welcome Lainey Wilson, Chance The Rapper, and Trombone Shorty, major stars in three distinctly American genres, in their Hatch Shell debuts. The amazing Boston Pops, America’s Orchestra, will perform patriotic favorites, as well as two world premiere pieces composed for this historic occasion. With the Pops providing the soundtrack for our biggest-ever fireworks display, this year’s event is going to be one for the record books, and I can’t wait to strike up the band!”

Statement from Chad Smith, BSO President and CEO:

“For well over a year, we have been working closely with Governor Healey, the MA250 Committee, the Mass Office of Travel and Tourism, and many others to make this year’s Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular the centerpiece of the Commonwealth’s America 250 celebration and a showcase of Massachusetts’ revolutionary spirit and history of innovation. We could not be more excited to share some of the details that will make this year’s event our biggest and most exciting ever. The Boston Pops is honored to again host this free concert, and we are so grateful to Governor Healey, Lieutenant Governor Driscoll, and MA250 Chair Bob Rivers for their partnership in this event, and to Mayor Wu and the City of Boston and DCR Commissioner LaChapelle for their continued support.

"The Boston Pops made history when it was founded back in 1885 to present summer concerts of light classical and popular music as a means of offering year-round employment to the musicians of the Boston Symphony. Under conductor Arthur Fiedler, the Pops began presenting free concerts on the Esplanade in 1929, and in 1974, with the help of David Mugar, the Pops’ July 4 event became the Fireworks Spectacular. Over these many years, the Pops’ July 4 event has

exemplified the BSO's longstanding commitment to bringing people together through extraordinary music making, and we look forward to celebrating America 250 with you whether you join us on the Esplanade or watch on CNN or WHDH."

Statement from Josué González, BSO Vice President, Education and External Engagement:

"We're thrilled to partner with libraries so that people from all over the state can be part of the celebration, whether or not they attend in person. Public libraries that provide free access to technology, internet, and materials for everyone regardless of age, origin, ability, background, or views are a cornerstone of a democratic society. Massachusetts is home to the first public library in the nation, so it is fitting that they and the people they serve be included in a celebration of our nation's freedom."

Special Guest Artists

Bios, Images & Video in the [Press Kit](#)

Lainey Wilson continues to captivate the world, capturing the hearts of fans and respect of her peers. In the midst of a non-stop year, Wilson is the subject of a new in-depth Netflix documentary, *Lainey Wilson: Keepin' Country Cool*, released her new song, "Can't Sit Still," as well as a collaboration with Miley Cyrus ("Younger You"), and headlined Stagecoach with an electric set. Additionally, Wilson is nominated for seven awards at the upcoming ACM Awards, including Entertainer of the Year (following two consecutive wins in the category). Last year, the 12-time CMA, 16-time ACM, Grammy winner and Grand Ole Opry member hosted the 59th CMA Awards (the first solo female host since Reba McEntire in 1991) and released the deluxe version of her album *Whirlwind*, featuring her #1 single, "Somewhere Over Laredo." Wilson has nine #1s to date, including "Watermelon Moonshine" (3-time Platinum) and "Heart Like A Truck" (4-time Platinum), plus collaborations with Jelly Roll ("Save Me") and HARDY ("wait in the truck"). Moreover, Wilson has worked with artists such as Reba McEntire, Dolly Parton and Post Malone, acted in Universal's adaptation of Colleen Hoover's *Reminders of Him* and Paramount's hit show *Yellowstone*, and launched her fifth collection with Wrangler, her own boot (Golden West Boots) line and jewelry line (The Lainey Wilson Jewelry Collection).

Chance The Rapper is a Grammy Award-winning independent hip-hop artist from Chicago. He made history as the first independent artist to win a Grammy with *Coloring Book*, earning Best New Artist and Best Rap Album. Known for

projects like *Acid Rap*, *Coloring Book*, and *Star Line*, Chance blends hip-hop, gospel, and soul while exploring faith, family, resilience, and Black identity.

Beyond music, he is the founder of SocialWorks, a Chicago nonprofit focused on youth empowerment, arts education, and civic engagement. As an independent rapper, entrepreneur, and community leader, Chance The Rapper continues to shape modern hip-hop from Chicago to the global stage.

Equally committed to community impact, Chance founded SocialWorks, a Chicago-based nonprofit dedicated to empowering youth through the arts, education, and civic engagement. Through initiatives such as OpenMike, Support CPS, and the New Chance Fund, the organization has invested more than \$12 million in the city, providing opportunities and resources for the next generation. From mixtape phenom to cultural innovator, Chance The Rapper remains a singular voice whose independence reflects a creative philosophy rooted in faith, community, and joy.

Few artists represent the spirit of New Orleans like **Trombone Shorty**. Born Troy Andrews, the Grammy-winning musician, producer, and bandleader, has spent his life carrying the city's rich musical traditions into the modern era through an electrifying fusion of jazz, funk, rock, soul, hip-hop, blues, and Caribbean influences.

A New Orleans native, Shorty first performed at Jazz Fest at just four years old alongside Bo Diddley. By six, he was leading his own brass band, and by his twenties, he was releasing critically acclaimed albums and touring the world. Since then, he's performed everywhere from the White House and Madison Square Garden to the Grammy Awards and the 2025 Super Bowl, while sharing stages with artists including Jeff Beck, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Bruno Mars, Pharrell, Foo Fighters, Jon Batiste, and Lenny Kravitz.

Beyond music, Shorty is a dedicated advocate for youth music education through The Trombone Shorty Foundation and a celebrated cultural leader in New Orleans. His explosive live performances and acclaimed albums, including 2022's *Lifted*, capture the joy, resilience, and energy of the city he proudly calls home.

Other Guest Artists

Regie Gibson became the Commonwealth's first Poet Laureate in June 2025. A former National Poetry Slam Individual Champion, he is a poet, songwriter,

author, and educator who currently serves as the Co-Artistic Director of Pedagogy at the Arts for Social Change. He is also an Assistant Professor at Berklee College of Music, where he teaches courses on performance and spoken word poetry, and an Instructor at Clark University in Worcester, where he teaches the introduction to poetry. His poems for public occasions engage complex historical and social issues, inviting audiences into the dialogue with hope and often humor. He is intentional about using poetry to create common ground and foster social cohesion. He holds a master's in fine arts in Creative Writing from New England College and lives in Lexington.

Boston Children's Chorus (BCC) was founded in 2003 by Hubie Jones, a civic leader who has worked for six decades to address the social challenges facing Boston's underserved children and communities. Named Boston's "Ambassadors of Harmony" by the *Boston Globe*, BCC harnesses the power of music to connect Boston's diverse communities, cultivate empathy, and inspire social inquiry. BCC's choir programs include 11 choirs with singers from 110 different ZIP codes in and around Boston. In addition to its after-school programming, BCC partners with schools to develop in-school choral programs in Mattapan, Roxbury, South Boston, East Boston, Allston, and Chelsea. The chorus has performed at venues including Symphony Hall and TD Garden in Boston, Royal Albert Hall in London, the Sydney Opera House, and the White House. BCC has appeared in TED Talks, made regular appearances on local TV and radio networks, and performed with high-profile artists such as Idina Menzel, Javier Muñoz, Hugh Jackman, and Leslie Odom, Jr. They previously performed with the Pops at the *Fireworks Spectacular* in 2007, 2014, and 2025.

Founded in 1940, the **Boston Crusaders (BAC)** is the second-oldest junior drum and bugle corps in the nation and a proud charter member of Drum Corps International. Composed entirely of brass, percussion, and color guard members under the age of 22, the Boston Crusaders travel over 10,000 miles each summer to compete on the Drum Corps International Tour. Over their 85+ year history, the Boston Crusaders have grown from a modest neighborhood activity into a national powerhouse. The Boston Crusaders have been consistent DCI finalists since 1999 and recently won their first Drum Corps International World Championship in 2025. The organization holds an impressive five George Zingali Best Color Guard Awards, and music recognitions including the Fred Sanford Best Percussion Performance Award and the Jim Ott Best Brass Performance Award. Known for their tenacious attitude and commitment to excellence, the Boston Crusaders seek to challenge members to reach their highest potential not only as artists, but in life beyond the performance field.

Middlesex County Volunteers Fifes and Drums (MCV) was established in 1982 toward the close of the Bicentennial by Boston-area musicians who wished to further explore the traditional repertoires of the regimental fife and drum corps associated with the European or American armies during the American War for Independence, 1775-1783. Today MCV has evolved into a repertory ensemble performing martial, dance, and folk music drawn from 17th thru 19th century sources in America and Europe, as well as contemporary compositions. Ultimately, MCV is about history and music, education and entertainment. MCV's mission is to research, perform, and promote the music of the fife and drum, to celebrate its historic roots, and to pass this living tradition along by example and instruction. Recent U.S. performances have included Boston Harborfest events, Drummers Call and Grand Illumination events at Colonial Williamsburg, featured performers at the 2026 Mid-Atlantic Flute Convention and an ongoing collaboration with the Boston Pops. Recent overseas tours have been to Canada (Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo), Switzerland (Basel Tattoo), and Scotland for the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. MCV has produced nine albums since the 1990s and was featured on the 2017 Boston Pops album *Lights, Camera...Music!* *Six Decades of John Williams*.

Pelin Su Yavuz is a 20-year-old pianist and vocalist whose musical journey began with singing before she started classical piano training at age 10 in Istanbul, Türkiye. After relocating to Boston in 2021, she developed a versatile artistic voice spanning jazz, R&B, neo-soul, hip-hop, funk, fusion, pop, and classical music. Su performed as a headliner for three consecutive days at the Boston Calling Music Festival. In June 2024, she won the Fidelity Investments Young Artists Competition and appeared as a featured jazz soloist with the Boston Pops at Symphony Hall. Since then, she has participated in multiple concerts, productions, and a Steinway piano recording project at Symphony Hall. She has also performed numerous times at MGM Music Hall at Fenway and appeared live aboard Princess Cruise Lines ships. During her high school years in Boston, Su studied at Berklee City Music High School Academy, Boston Arts Academy, and the New England Conservatory Preparatory School before beginning her undergraduate studies at Berklee College of Music. She was also nominated for "Best Jazz Artist of the Year" at the Boston Music Awards. Yavuz's artistry has gained international attention through viral performance videos and a rapidly growing online audience, earning recognition from acclaimed artists and producers including Lenny Kravitz, Questlove, David Foster, Jon Batiste, Rick Beato, Robert Glasper, Randy Jackson, and Anderson .Paak.

Originally formed under the joint sponsorship of Boston University and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the all-volunteer **Tanglewood Festival Chorus** (TFC) was established in 1970 by its founding conductor, the late John Oliver. In the 2025–26 season, the TFC performed with the BSO and Andris Nelsons in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* to celebrate the 125th anniversary of Symphony Hall, Samuel Barber's opera *Vanessa*, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, and in music from John Adams's opera *Nixon in China*; under Herbert Blomstedt in Brahms's *Nänie* and *Schicksalslied*, and with Dima Slobodeniouk in John Adams's *Harmonium* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The chorus joins Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops for the holiday and spring Pops seasons and performs with the BSO at Tanglewood.

USS Constitution Color Guard consists of active-duty U.S. Navy sailors stationed aboard "Old Ironsides" in Boston, responsible for presenting the colors at high-profile events. They represent the oldest commissioned warship afloat, often participating in community outreach, sporting events, and ceremonies throughout the greater Boston area.

Composers of World Premiere Works

Carlos Simon is a Grammy-nominated composer, curator, and activist who was appointed the inaugural Composer Chair of the Boston Symphony Orchestra for a three-year term, starting in 2024. He is the current Composer-in-Residence for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and frequently writes for the National Symphony Orchestra and Washington National Opera. As part of the BSO's *E Pluribus Unum: From Many, One* festival in January celebrating America 250, the BSO performed his *Good News Mass*, and the Boston Symphony Chamber Players (BSCP) gave the world premiere of his *Gardner Suite*, which was inspired by works in Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. The BSCP performs the *Gardner Suite* at the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico on May 31. Next fall, the BSO will perform Simon's new *Double Concerto for Violin and Cello*. Raised in Atlanta with a long lineage of preachers and connections to gospel music to inspire him, Simon is based in Washington, where he is on the faculty of Georgetown University.

James M. (Jim) Stephenson's music has been described as "astonishingly inventive" (*Musical America*), "deserving to be heard again and again" (*Boston Herald*), and "exquisite music" (*Chicago Tribune*). These accolades have resulted in continued new collaborations involving his music with esteemed ensembles such as The Chicago Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, the symphonies of

Baltimore, St. Louis, Atlanta, and Houston, Grant Park Festival Orchestra, Cabrillo Festival, Brevard, Colorado Music Festival, and other performing groups like Joffrey Ballet and San Francisco Ballet. His "Fanfare for Democracy" premiered at President Biden's Inauguration and was subsequently commissioned by 51 orchestras (all states) across America, premiering with the Boston Pops in 2021. His "Spirit of America" will also be featured at the upcoming America 250 Boston Pops July 4 program broadcast on CNN. His Symphony No. 2, "VOICES," has won two awards, and has been performed nearly 75 times in the last decade. Stephenson has written concertos, sonatas, and chamber music for musicians from nearly every major orchestra, and has been a collaborator with Joshua Bell on many occasions. His recent "Quartet for a New Tomorrow" was premiered in Lithuania in early 2026, and was immediately followed by three United States performances, with three more scheduled in the coming months. On his future schedule are two more symphonies, several concertos, other orchestral and wind ensemble works, and a new "Odyssey of the Orchestra" for the Naples Philharmonic's young audiences. Jim is a 1990 graduate ('with distinction') from the New England Conservatory.

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Additional support is provided by: AT&T, Blue Cross Blue Shield Massachusetts, The Chiles Foundation, Eversource, The Fairmont Copley Plaza, General Dynamics, Leader Bank, National Grid, Millipore Sigma, Point 32 Health Companies, P&G Gillette, The Red Sox Foundation, Samuel Adams, and Suffolk.

Public Safety and Site Restrictions

The rehearsal on July 3 is closed to the public.

Gates will open to the public at 12 p.m. (noon) on July 4.

Alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis are prohibited on the Esplanade per Mass DCR rules.

More public safety information including details about when Storrow Drive will be closed to vehicles will be provided by state officials closer to the day of the show and posted on the [event website](#).

About Massachusetts 250

The Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT) commemorates Massachusetts' role in the American Revolution with the Massachusetts 250 campaign, celebrating 250 years of the country's independence and the state's revolutionary spirit. The statewide campaign highlights often-told stories like Paul Revere's ride while uplifting underrepresented voices and unveiling untold stories with hundreds of events presented across the Bay State. For more information, please visit massachusetts250.org and follow the campaign on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Threads](#).

About the Boston Pops July 4 Fireworks Spectacular and Keith Lockhart

Since 1929, the Boston Symphony's Pops orchestra has performed its free Independence Day concert on the Esplanade, a beloved Boston tradition first conceived by Pops conductor Arthur Fiedler and carried on by John Williams and, since 1995, Keith Lockhart ([see bio](#)). A fireworks display became part of the tradition in 1974 when the late David Mugar became the event's producer, which he remained until 2016. In 2017, the Pops opened a new page in the BSO's history, presenting its first self-produced Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular. [Read more about the event's history](#).

Press Contacts

To register for July Fourth media credentials, contact Steve MacDonald at stageaccess@aol.com

For interviews with Keith Lockhart and other guest artists, contact Jan Devereux at jdevereux@bso.org

[Click here](#) for a press kit with full bios and photos of guest artists.

More BSO News

For more news about the BSO and Boston Pops, [read our recent press releases](#) or follow us on social media.



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Tanglewood | 297 West Street | Lenox, MA 01240 | [Box Office Hours](#)

Symphony Hall | 301 Massachusetts Avenue | Boston, MA 02115 | [Box Office Hours](#)

Ticketing & Customer Service | 617.266.1200 (M-F: 10-4pm & Sat: 12:30pm-4:30pm) Service & Tickets | Subscriptions 888.266.7575

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