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## Boston Symphony Orchestra Names Yiran Zhao and Jakub Przybycień as New Assistant Conductors

**Zhao and Przybycień will make their BSO Assistant Conductor debuts at Tanglewood in 2027**

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Boston Symphony Orchestra Music Director **Andris Nelsons** and the **BSO** have announced **Yiran Zhao** and **Jakub Przybycień** as the orchestra's new Assistant Conductors starting with the 2026–27 season for two-year terms. They succeed Samy Rachid and Anna Handler, whose tenures will end at the conclusion of the Tanglewood season this summer. Both Zhao and Przybycień will make their BSO conducting debuts as Assistant Conductor during the 2027 Tanglewood season.

Born and raised in China, **Yiran Zhao** was a 2025 Conducting Fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center (TMC), where she conducted in 15 concerts leading the TMC Orchestra, vocal fellows, and chamber ensembles through a variety of repertoire, including Ravel's opera *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, Bartók's Dance Suite, Carlos Simon's *Four Black American Dances*, and several world premieres. As a prior-year TMC Conducting Fellow, she will make her BSO debut in a subscription concert shared with Music Director Andris Nelsons and fellow 2025 TMC Conducting Fellow Leonard Weiss on April 3, 2026, followed by an engagement with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra's Mendelssohn Academy in June 2026.

A composer, pianist, and singer, as well as conductor, Zhao is a national winner of the 2024 American Prize for Composition. A recipient of a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from the Yale School of Music, where she was a Robert Shaw Prize recipient, Zhao is currently a soprano with the GRAMMY-winning Apollo's Fire and The Crossing and serves as a Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellow at the Curtis Institute of Music, studying with Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Jim Ross and assisting various orchestras and Curtis Opera productions.

Polish-born **Jakub Przybycień** was Assistant Conductor of the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra and National Orchestra of Catalonia from 2023 to 2025. Recent debuts include the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra, European Union Youth Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, and NFM Leopoldinum Orchestra, as well as guest appearances during the 2025–26 season with the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra and National Orchestra of Catalonia (with cellist Kian Soltani), Sinfonia Rotterdam, Deutsche Philharmonie Merck (Beethoven's Ninth Symphony), Arctic Philharmonic, Zielona Gora Philharmonic, and Szczecin Philharmonic. Along with assisting with the Balthasar Neuman Ensemble's production of Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, Przybycień conducts performances of Daria Kuziak's *Holos* in three different Polish cities across the season.

An accomplished violinist, Przybycień is winner of the 2025 Ernst Von Schuch Conducting Prize, finalist for the 2025 Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award (Salzburg) and 2025 International Conducting Competition Rotterdam, and semifinalist at the 2024 Malko Competition. He is currently based in Zurich, Switzerland.

"The Assistant Conductors are an important part of our musical community here, and I'm very pleased to welcome Yiran and Jakub to our BSO family beginning this fall," said BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons. "The orchestra and I were very impressed with the high level of all the finalists at this round of auditions, where Yiran and Jakub showed an especially strong connection with the orchestra as well as mature technique. I look forward to working with them both in the coming years."

## About the BSO Assistant Conductor Program

The **Boston Symphony Orchestra Assistant Conductor Program** offers emerging conductors hands-on experience leading one of the world's finest symphony orchestras in concert. Assistant Conductors also work with the BSO Music Director and guest conductors to prepare the orchestra for performances at Symphony Hall, Tanglewood, Carnegie Hall, and on national and international tours. They also serve as cover conductors, prepared to step in on short notice in the event that the scheduled conductor is ill.

The BSO's longest-serving Assistant or Associate Conductors were Concertmasters **Richard Burgin** and **Joseph Silverstein**. **Michael Tilson Thomas** earned instant fame when he replaced an ailing **William Steinberg** (BSO Music Director, 1969–72) mid-concert and, following his BSO tenure, has earned international acclaim for his artistic leadership of the San Francisco Symphony, New World Symphony, and London Symphony Orchestra. **Seiji Ozawa** established the BSO's current Assistant Conductor program in 1986. The program provides opportunities for early-career conductors to work consistently with the BSO's Music Director and established guest conductors as well as the orchestra. Many of the BSO's recent former assistant conductors have gone on to careers with major symphony orchestras, including **Shi-Yeon Sung**—the BSO's first female assistant conductor—who is formerly the Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Gyeonggi Philharmonic Orchestra and currently the Auckland Philharmonia's Principal Guest Conductor, and current BSO Assistant Conductor **Anna Handler** who has been Kapellmeister of the Deutsche Oper Berlin since fall 2025 and in September becomes the new Chief Conductor of the Ulster Orchestra.

### BSO Assistant Conductors

Richard Burgin 1934–1943 (Associate Conductor, 1943–1966)

Charles Wilson 1966–1969

Michael Tilson Thomas 1969–1970 (Associate Conductor, 1970–1972; Principal Guest Conductor, 1972–1974)

Joseph Silverstein 1971–1984

Carl St. Clair 1986–1990

Pascal Verrot 1986–1990

Grant Llewellyn 1990–1993

Robert Spano 1990–1993

Thomas Dausgaard 1993–1995

David Wroe 1993–1995

Richard Westerfield 1995–1997 (Associate Conductor, 1997–1998)

Federico Cortese 1998–2002

Ilan Volkov 1998–2001

Jens Georg Bachman 2004–2007

Ludovic Morlot 2004–2007  
Julian Kuerti 2007–2010  
Shi-Yeon Sung 2007–2010  
Marcelo Lehninger 2010–2013 (Associate Conductor, 2013–2015)  
Sean Newhouse 2010–2012  
Andris Poga 2012–2014  
Ken-David Masur 2014–2018 (Associate Conductor, 2018)  
Moritz Gnann 2015–2017  
Yu-An Chang 2018–2020  
Anna Rakitina 2019–2023  
Earl Lee 2021–2024  
Samy Rachid 2023–2026  
Anna Handler 2024–2026

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We are also delighted to announce that **Bank of America** has focused their longtime season support as the BSO Youth and Family Programs Sponsor, providing access to the arts beginning with the Concert for the City and for other family-friendly programming throughout the BSO season.

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