FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 17, 2026

MEDIA CONTACT

For H+H: Susan Baranyi, sbaranyi@handelandhaydn.org
For MAAH: Sandi Goldfarb, sgoldfarb@rasky.com

FREE Emancipation Proclamation Concert on New Year's Eve Traces Emotional Journey from Bondage to Freedom

Presented by the Handel and Haydn Society and the Museum of African American History Boston I Nantucket

Concert takes place at Trinity Church in Boston's Copley Square,

Thursday, Dec 31 at 1pm and is an event of First Night Boston 2027.

BOSTON | For the 13th year, the Handel and Haydn Society (H+H) and the Museum of African American History (MAAH) invite Boston to gather on December 31st to honor progress for human rights and the ongoing pursuit of freedom. Commemorating Boston's 1863 Grand Jubilee where H+H members performed in celebration of Abraham Lincoln's enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation, this year's concert takes us from the uncertainty of a night spent waiting for freedom through hope and the ultimate joy of its arrival. **H+H Resident Conductor Anthony Trecek-King** leads **members of the H+H Orchestra and Chorus** with **Massachusetts Poet Laureate Regie Gibson** and special guest soloists for this annual tradition, free and tickets are not required.

"We must ask ourselves what we might have felt if we had waited all night, not knowing whether freedom would be granted," said H+H Resident Conductor Anthony Trecek-King. "This concert begins where the story itself began: in the dark, waiting. On New Year's Eve 1862, families across the country kept watch through the night for word that a proclamation of freedom would hold. This year's concert follows that same arc, from darkness and unanswered questions, through defiance, to a morning full of blessings. This program traces the emotional journey between bondage and freedom, and closes in celebration as the 1863 Grand Jubilee did."

"The Emancipation Proclamation changed the lives of millions of Americans," said Dr.

Noelle Trent, President & CEO, MAAH. "This concert reminds us of the fierce urgency

and anticipation experienced by people as they waited to receive news of President

Lincoln's signing and the promise of a new day. In light of recent events, the hope of that moment is relevant to us today."

Concert Information

Thursday, December 31 at 1:00pm; doors open at 12:15pm

Trinity Church, 206 Clarendon St, Boston

The Emancipation Proclamation Concert is free and tickets are not required. Guests will have an opportunity to make a donation if they wish at the concert. The Emancipation Proclamation Concert is an official event of First Night Boston 2027.

H+H and the Emancipation Proclamation

The Handel and Haydn Society is the oldest continuously performing arts organization in the U.S. and has served as both a musical and a civic leader in the Boston community since its founding in 1815. During the Civil War, H+H gave numerous concerts in support of the Union Army (H+H member Julia Ward Howe wrote "The Battle Hymn of the Republic") and on January 1, 1863, H+H performed at the Grand Jubilee Concert celebrating the enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation. Two years later, H+H performed at the Boston memorial service for Abraham Lincoln. In 1913 H+H participated in celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation at Mechanic's Hall in Boston. H+H began presenting a free Emancipation Proclamation Concert in partnership with MAAH in 2012.

About the Museum of African American History | Boston & Nantucket

Founded in 1967, MAAH is New England's oldest museum dedicated to preserving, conserving, and interpreting the contributions of African Americans. Through timely programs, thought-provoking exhibits and special events, the Museum of African American History I Boston & Nantucket (MAAH) connects Colonial and early African American history and culture in Boston and New England with the abolition of slavery and current explorations of race and human rights struggles. MAAH's four historic properties are found at two sites on Boston's Beacon Hill and Nantucket Island, and along two Black Heritage Trails® that tell the story of organized black communities from the Colonial Period through the 19th century.