

## Press Information:

### ***The BSO marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day landings***

**Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and composer James Olsen will work together with World War II veterans, school children, and amateur and professional musicians to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day.**

June 2019 marks 75 years since the D-Day landings when over 156,000 Allied troops departed from the Hampshire and Dorset coasts to invade Nazi-occupied Europe. The BSO is collaborating with leading young British composer James Olsen to commemorate this anniversary through an intergenerational project, *D-Day 75: A Musical Documentary*, which will bring together World War II veterans, school children and amateur and professional musicians. Through this project, different generations will collaborate on a new piece of music, which will have its first performance at Southsea Common on Friday 7 June 2019.

The project will bring together composer and filmmaker James Olsen, D-Day veterans from the Royal Alfred Seafarers' Society in Banstead (a care home for retired seafarers, their widows and dependants), and approximately 100 young people from Portsmouth. James and selected schoolchildren will interview the veterans, capturing their memories and stories as a unique 'living history' resource for future generations.

Based on the veterans' stories, the responses will then be recorded and shaped by James into the composition. The children's ideas will be combined with James' own compositional material and other primary sources from D-Day to form a 'musical documentary' for a large concert band style orchestra (made up of winds, brass, percussion and double basses), massed school choir and narrator. The new piece, entitled *The Key Note of Everything to be SIMPLICITY* (a phrase from General Montgomery's one-page sketch for D-Day) will have its premiere at Southsea Common on Friday 7 June 2019 as part of a weekend of commemorative events.

The choir will be composed of young people from local schools, and before the performance James will provide coaching sessions for the teachers, equipping them to teach the new piece to their students. The music will be performed by an orchestra of amateur musicians, playing side-by-side with professional BSO players. The group of approximately 70 talented amateur players will be invited from those who attended the BSO's 'Rusty and Not so Rusty Musicians' woodwind and brass events in Bournemouth in 2017 and 2018, along with amateur musicians from the Portsmouth area.

*D-Day 75* will be an extremely beneficial project for all involved. The schoolchildren will have the opportunity to learn more about this important event in 20<sup>th</sup> century history, meet fascinating people

who will provide them with first-hand accounts, and acquire new musical skills. The 'Rusty Musicians' will have the incredible opportunity of rehearsing and performing in the premiere of a newly commissioned work, learning from BSO musicians throughout the project. The D-Day veterans will play an important role in educating the younger generations about the Normandy landings, as well as ensuring that their memories and stories have been recorded for posterity. This project will also benefit the wider Portsmouth community, as it will bring together diverse local communities to commemorate, celebrate and feel pride in the city's rich cultural history through music.

Uniquely for such a project, James and the BSO are documenting the whole process online through a series of YouTube videos, which will be available as a learning resource for participating schools and more broadly to inspire young composers and engage the general public. James will record the conversations that he and the schoolchildren will have with veterans, produce a regular vlog on his YouTube channel, and provide regular updates on social media.

*"I'm thrilled to be working with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra on this innovative project. We are fortunate that the Normandy landings are still in living memory, and their 75th anniversary provides an ideal subject for one of my 'musical documentaries' combining live performance, oral history and video. Documenting the stories of veterans is a huge privilege, and this project is particularly close to my heart given that one of the participating D-Day veterans is my own grandfather. I very much hope that we will raise awareness of a pivotal moment in European history not only amongst the young people who participate, but more widely amongst those who attend the performance and follow the project through our online documentaries."*

**James Olsen, Composer and Filmmaker for D-Day 75: A Musical Documentary**

The BSO is delighted to work in partnership with Portsmouth City Council to deliver this project, as well as the D-Day museum in Portsmouth. As the Orchestra of the South and South West, the BSO works across the coast lines from which D-Day was launched.

In order to cover the costs of workshops, rehearsal, concert, cost of the commission, and all associated resources, the BSO successfully took part in the Big Give Christmas Challenge, the UK's biggest online match-funding campaign.

## ENDS

For further information, enquiries & requests please contact: Tamsin Eddey at Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra [teddey@bsorchestra.co.uk](mailto:teddey@bsorchestra.co.uk) / 01202 644 706 / 07860 776646

## Notes to Editors:

1. [1 x Image](#) attached 'D-Day Veterans involved in the BSO's D-Day 75: (L-R) Lieut Cdr Geoffrey Haskins, Legion of Honour (Fr) RNZN and Mr Robert Ball, Legion of Honour (Fr) former merchant seaman' (Photo Credit: Olsen Verlag) and [2 x Image](#) attached 'BSO Rusty and Not So Rusty Musicians' (Photo Credit: Kevin Clifford)

2. Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra is a cultural beacon for the South and South West, existing to give people across the region of over 10,000 square miles the opportunity to experience and participate in great art. As one of the UK's busiest orchestras, the BSO reaches around 5,000 concert-goers per week and is the only UK symphony orchestra not based in a major city.
3. The BSO's 2018/19 Concert Season will mark Chief Conductor Kirill Karabits tenth season at the helm of the BSO, he will be joined by Marta Gardolińska who will start her role as the BSO's Leverhulme Young Conductor in Association. The Orchestra is also delighted to welcome cellist Johannes Moser as the 2018/19 Artist-in-Residence. Kirill Karabits will launch the season with Mahler's Second Symphony, he will also be conducting other great symphonies by Shostakovich, Elgar, Beethoven and Dvořák. There is also the welcome return of conductors Ion Marin, Karl-Heinz Steffens, Antonio Mendez and James Feddeck.
4. A core part of the BSO's mission is its work beyond the concert hall. BSO Participate offers a diverse range of people across a myriad of communities the opportunity to experience the power of music, irrespective of circumstance. Through Participate's five specially tailored strands of activity – Bbs, Blast, Rising Talent, Resonate and Boost – the BSO organises a variety of activities across the South and South West ranging from inspirational workshops in schools to special performances in care homes. For more information please visit [BSOlive.com/bsoparticipate/](http://BSOlive.com/bsoparticipate/)
5. As a registered arts charity the BSO is increasingly reliant on the support of individuals, charitable trusts and companies. The income earned from ticket sales, commercial activity and grants from public funding sources help the Orchestra greatly and is increasingly invaluable in supporting BSO's on-going mission to enrich and inspire the cultural lives of many.
6. The BSO's Principal Broadcast Partner is BBC Radio 3
7. The BSO is Classic FM's Orchestra in the South of England.
8. James Olsen ('brilliantly imaginative' – The Guardian; 'a striking musical imagination' – The Sunday Times) is a leading young British composer whose music has been performed by, amongst others, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia, The Britten Sinfonia, the London Sinfonietta and Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin. He first came to attention at the age of 16 when The Times hailed him as a "great British hope"; he subsequently read music at King's College, Cambridge, when he gained a double starred first, and studied with Wolfgang Rihm and Julian Anderson. Three commercial recordings of his music have been released. He teaches at the University of Cambridge and has a YouTube vlog which gives aspiring young musicians an insight into the life of a professional composer.
9. THE ROYAL ALFRED SEAFARERS' SOCIETY, as a charitable organisation, has offered accommodation and care for former seafarers since its formation in 1865. Governed by a Royal Charter, it provides nursing, dementia and respite care, residential accommodation and sheltered housing for former seafarers their widows/widowers and dependants, and whomever

else the Society can accommodate. The Royal Alfred Seafarers' Society welcomes into our first class care all former seafarers from either the Royal or Merchant Navy, Fishermen, Royal Marines, WRNS, and associated seafaring and shipping industries, their widows/widowers and dependants. We are proud of our 14 acre site with modern accommodation and 68 bedroomed care home, including a 36 room dementia unit, where residents are accommodated in well-appointed and comfortable ensuite rooms surrounding lovely garden courtyards, with specialist care and activities provided by capable and understanding staff.

