

Embargo: Thursday 23 April, 00:01

COMMUNITY MEETS OVER THE RAINBOW



BSO Voices sing through the lockdown © BSO

BSO Voices, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra’s Southampton-based community choir, unites to bring joy and thanks to key workers across the South Coast.

Hundreds of schoolchildren from across the South West contribute rainbow artworks to the film.

Singers missing the thrill of live performance united this week to sing *Over the Rainbow* — a song with particular significance as the nation celebrates its key workers — for an online audience.

The community choir, which brings together people from across the region, was set to perform the work in a concert of ‘Silver Screen Showstoppers’ at the O2 Guildhall, Southampton, alongside Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO), in early-April. The concert was cancelled, but the choir has continued to meet weekly, with singers performing from home throughout the lockdown period.

Pete Harrison, Musical Director of BSO Voices, said, ***“BSO Voices exists to unite people through a love of singing and in these strange and introverted times it felt natural to join together, albeit***

physically distant, in song. I hope that members will continue to find music a comfort as we meet online”

BSO Voices is a vibrant community choir and is a part of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO) family. The group of over 140 singers rehearses weekly in Southampton, giving at least three performances each year with the professional orchestra. Choir members do not audition or need to be able to read music, but instead have an open mind and be willing to celebrate music through the joy of singing.

“Working for the NHS in the past month has felt like a whirlwind, but it’s helped to keep in touch with BSO Voices — we talk about music instead of viruses! So although singing into a camera at home felt strange, it also felt like something familiar, and has been such an important distraction for me personally.” Laura, member of BSO Voices

“I’m worried about my family, particularly one member who is treating Covid patients as a front line worker — having the camaraderie of the choir really helps!” Robert, member of BSO Voices

Over 400 local schoolchildren from across the region contributed to the film by submitting rainbow-themed artwork. Last year, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra performed to over 16,000 under-18s; the team contacted its educational partners and were thrilled and overwhelmed by the large number of responses in just a matter of days.

To hear BSO Voices perform *Over the Rainbow* visit bsolive.com from Thursday 23 April, 5pm.

[ENDS]

Notes to Editors:

For further information please contact:

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1. Images available [here](#)
 - 1) BSO Voices unite online during UK lockdown ©BSO
 - 2) Conductor Pete Harrison © Andy Holdsworth
 - 3) BSO Voices in performance with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra © BSO
 - 4) Rainbow artworks from children across the South West
2. BSO Voices is a Southampton-based community choir that rehearses weekly. To find out more about membership contact Ben Jennings bjennings@bsorchestra.co.uk
3. Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra is a world-class ensemble known for spearheading change both on and off the stage since 1893. Highly regarded for its ambitious programming and recordings, its Prokofiev cycle and survey of Eastern European music under the baton of Chief Conductor Kirill Karabits has received recent critical acclaim.

4. In 2019, the BSO won the Royal Philharmonic Society Impact Award for its work in improving opportunities for the next generation of disabled talent. The Orchestra serves a 10,000-square mile region, touring around 140 performances each year to audiences in South West England and beyond; it also offers a number of smaller ensembles, including BSO Resound, the disabled-led ensemble pushing the boundaries of performance practice, and Kokoro, a contemporary chamber ensemble.
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.