

PRESS RELEASE

Thursday 17 November 2022

BOURNEMOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES NEW HOME IN SOMERSET IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE OCTAGON THEATRE



Chief Conductor Kirill Karabits and the Orchestra return to Yeovil this weekend ©Mark Allan

- Communities in Somerset set to experience greater access to world class music-making as **Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO)** announces new residency with **Yeovil's Octagon Theatre**.
- The Theatre, which is managed and owned by **South Somerset District Council**, is due to undergo a proposed £29.01m transformation to become a flagship cultural venue for the South West.
- As resident orchestra, local audiences will have access to more **symphonic performances** by the BSO and its world-leading conductors and soloists, alongside a greater number of **family-friendly 'BSO On Your Doorstep' chamber-scale concerts, workshops and events**.
- The BSO returns on **Saturday 19 November**, when its Chief Conductor **Kirill Karabits** conducts a programme of Schubert, Mendelssohn and Walton, with violinist **Ning Feng**.

The internationally renowned Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO) and The Octagon Theatre in Yeovil have announced a major new partnership that will see the theatre become BSO's "home in Somerset" when it reopens following the £29.01m transformation of the venue into a flagship cultural venue for the South West.

The partnership will see a **regular concert series** at the venue from the Orchestra alongside an exciting and **ambitious education and outreach programme** designed to bring world-class musical opportunities to residents and visitors of Somerset.

The Octagon Theatre development will see the 622-seat theatre increase to 900 seats with vastly improved acoustics in the main auditorium and additional performance and participatory spaces. The venue, which is owned and managed by South Somerset District Council (SSDC), is also planning to develop an exciting new arts engagement outreach programme that will create more opportunities for people to engage and benefit from the creative arts through schools, performances, workshops, regular classes and special projects that will focus on those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Councillor Mike Best, Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing for SSDC and Chairman of Somerset Council, said: *"For too long our residents have had to travel outside of Somerset to experience the type of performances and projects that this partnership will bring. Our ambitious and forward thinking plans to develop The Octagon Theatre into a flagship regional centre of excellence for the arts is already proving to be a catalyst for change with South Somerset designated a "Priority Place for Arts Council England. None of this would be happening without our commitment to The Octagon and I am thrilled to see this partnership develop, which I hope will be the first of many for the developed Octagon Theatre, and hope that it will continue over many years to come."*

Dougie Scarfe, the Orchestra's Chief Executive said: *"We're thrilled that our partners at The Octagon Theatre and South Somerset District Council share our passion for the empowering impact of live music. We're looking forward to deepening our relationship with communities in Somerset, with even more live concerts from the full Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, plus family-friendly 'BSO On Your Doorstep' chamber-scale concerts, workshops and events. Bringing music into people's lives is why we exist, and we remain committed to reaching people who need our music, now more than ever."*

Octagon Theatre Manager, Adam Burgan said: *"I am absolutely delighted that we can announce this partnership with the amazing Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. As one of UK's best loved orchestras it will be fantastic to make the developed Octagon Theatre their new home in Somerset. Everyone deserves the opportunity to listen, watch and be inspired by music. This residency with BSO will enable us to bring world-class artists to Somerset for regular performances throughout the year that will engage and delight our audiences, whilst work with BSO's amazing Participate team will create more opportunities for our communities to have access to and be enriched by BSO's talented musicians. I look forward to developing and delivering activity with BSO over the coming years and to see the direct benefits from this partnership."*

While much activity will be delivered when the development of The Octagon Theatre is expected to be completed in 2025, there are already opportunities for audiences to benefit with the BSO due to perform at The Octagon Theatre on Saturday 19 November 2022. The Orchestra will be conducted by its Chief Conductor, Kirill Karabits, in an Italian themed programme to include works from Walton, Mendelssohn and Schubert.

The concert follows three successful 'BSO On Your Doorstep' performances at Westlands Entertainment Venue as arranged and performed by BSO's professional musicians earlier this year. The series of family-friendly performances was successful in introducing people of all ages to live classical music in a relaxed environment. More of these concerts are being planned alongside schools concerts later in 2023.

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra performs at The Octagon Theatre, Yeovil, on Saturday 19 November at 7.30pm. For tickets and further information see bsolive.com

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Notes to Editors:

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1. [Images available here](#)
 - a) Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra
 - b) Chief Conductor Kirill Karabits
 - c) Violinist Ning Feng
2. **Concert listings** — tickets and full details: bsolive.com

Sat 19 Nov, 7.30pm (The Octagon, Yeovil)

An Italian Affair

Kirill Karabits *conductor*

Ning Feng *violin*

Schubert — Overture in the Italian Style

Walton — Violin Concerto

Mendelssohn — Symphony No.4 'Italian'

3. **About Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra**
www.bsolive.com | @BSOrchestra

Chief Conductor — Kirill Karabits | Artist-in-Residence — Felix Klier

Principal Guest Conductor — Mark Wigglesworth | Associate Guest Conductor — David Hill

Conductor Emeritus — Marin Alsop | Conductor Laureate — Andrew Litton

Assistant Conductor — Tom Fetherstonhaugh

One of the UK's best-loved orchestras, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra is a professional ensemble known for championing the role of culture in people's lives. With residencies in Bournemouth, Bristol, Exeter, Portsmouth, Poole and Yeovil, it is the largest cultural provider in the South West of England, serving one of the biggest and most diverse regions in the UK.

The Orchestra, under its **Chief Conductor Kirill Karabits**, is known for pushing artistic boundaries, and its ongoing series of music from former Soviet states, **Voices from the East**, continues to gain praise. Boasting an enviable list of principal conductors, including Marin Alsop, the first female principal conductor of a major UK orchestra, the BSO has given memorable performances worldwide and with regular live broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM.

The Orchestra's livestreamed broadcasts have cemented its reputation for presenting live symphonic music of the highest quality, and remain popular around the globe following its inaugural season in 2020.

In 2022/23, the series features artists Dame Sarah Connolly, James Ehnes, Laura van der Heijden, and a host of the UK's leading music broadcasters. Described by The Times as "one of the most inspiring figures on the concert scene today", **Horn player Felix Klier also returns — as the Orchestra's Artist-in-Residence** — following a memorable UK concerto debut with the BSO in 2021.

Committed to new music, the BSO has presented premiere performances of works by Carmen Ho, Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, Magnus Lindberg, Elizabeth Ogonek and Shirley J. Thompson OBE in recent years. It celebrates the work of composer **Anna Korsun**, who becomes its Composer-in-Residence, in 2023.

The Orchestra also marks a landmark moment when inclusive ensembles BSO Resound and RNS Moves join forces for a new commission by Kate Whitley, with performances in Poole and Gateshead in early 2023. Winner

of the 2019 Royal Philharmonic Society's Impact Award, BSO Resound — the world's first professional disabled-led ensemble at the core of a major orchestra — continues to receive international attention for igniting change.

Challenging barriers to high-quality music for all, the BSO leads hundreds of events each year, from award-winning work in health and care settings to partnerships with schools and music education hubs, and in 2022, the Orchestra welcomed its first community-based Young Associate musicians.

The BSO's Principal Broadcast Partner is **BBC Radio 3**

The BSO is **Classic FM**'s Orchestra in the South of England.