

PRESS RELEASE

Thursday 21 March 2024

KIRILL KARABITS' IMPACT WITH BOURNEMOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA RECOGNISED WITH HONORARY OBE



Kirill Karabits with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra ©Corin Messer

- **Kirill Karabits has been recognised with an Honorary OBE by His Majesty The King for Services to Music and the promotion of symphonic works from Ukraine and eastern Europe in the UK.**
- Karabits, who this season concludes a remarkable 15-year tenure at the helm, becomes the BSO's **Conductor Laureate & Artistic Director, Voices from the East** this October.
- His closing chapter as the Orchestra's Chief Conductor is celebrated with a series of events at **Lighthouse, Poole**, London's **Southbank Centre**, and **Bristol Beacon** throughout spring.

Kirill Karabits' 15-year tenure with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO) will be remembered for a series of definitive and premiere performances of symphonic music from his native Ukraine and beyond. Having shared over 60 works from eastern Europe and central Asia, Karabits' impact on the British music scene has today [21 March] been recognised with an Honorary OBE.

With a clear and ongoing mission to share the symphonic treasures of his native Ukraine and beyond, Kirill Karabits — the son of composer Ivan Karabits (1945-2002) — has performed music from his homeland for Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's audiences in the South West of England since 2009.

In recognition of his impact on the UK's music scene, Karabits has been awarded an **Honorary OBE for Services to Music and the promotion of symphonic works from Ukraine and Eastern Europe in the UK.**

The Voices from the East series has featured works from **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Macedonia, Poland, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine** — and has included recordings, broadcasts, live performances, and newly commissioned music. Many of the works fuse folk elements with the western symphonic tradition, enlightening listeners to distant musical landscapes — and, in 2021, The Times declared that: *“music lovers in Dorset may now be the most knowledgeable in the western world about the symphonic pieces of eastern Europe and central Asia.”*

Kirill Karabits, Chief Conductor of Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, said: *“I am deeply grateful to receive this Honorary OBE for the journey I have been privileged to share with the BSO's musicians and audiences over the past 15 years — I'm deeply proud of what we have achieved together. I look forward to celebrating the Voices from the East series with our performances in Bristol, Poole, and London this spring, and to continuing our journey when I become Conductor Laureate & Artistic Director, Voices from the East, later this year.”*

Dougie Scarfe OBE DL, Chief Executive of Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, said: *“We are thrilled that Kirill's impact on the UK's musical landscape has been recognised with an Honorary OBE. He is a musical detective unlike any other and it has been an adventure to explore this music, which has included new commissions and discoveries of lesser-known symphonic pieces. The recognition of Kirill's impact is further evidence of music's ability to open our minds to new places and spaces — and we look forward to continuing the journey.”*

Karabits becomes **Conductor Laureate & Artistic Director, Voices from the East** later this year. His tenure as Chief Conductor is celebrated with a series of events at: **Lighthouse, Poole** [1-15 May]; **London's Southbank Centre** [19 May]; and **Bristol Beacon** [7 June].

In Poole, highlights include Tchaikovsky's rarely performed last opera, *Iolanta* [8 May], and music by Ivan Karabits, Giya Kancheli and Mily Balakirev [1 May], ahead of closing the season with

Shostakovich's all-encompassing Fifth Symphony [15 May] in a programme that also features works by Bartók and Prokofiev.

In London, Karabits conducts three symphonic concerts in a **day-long festival celebrating Voices from the East discoveries** at the Southbank Centre [19 May]. The performances each cover a different region – the first with music from Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, the second Georgia and Armenia, before concluding with Ukraine. Karabits then closes **Bristol Beacon's** inaugural orchestral season [7 June] with music by Karayev, Korngold, and Dvořák.

[ENDS]

Notes to Editors:

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1. Images available [here](#)
 - a) BSO Chief Conductor Kirill Karabits ©Mark Allan
 - b) Kirill Karabits with the BSO
 - c) BSO's Chief Executive, Dougie Scarfe OBE DL ©Corin Messer

2. Event listings – see full details at bsolive.com

Wednesday 1 May, 730pm

Lighthouse, Poole

Kirill Karabits (conductor)
Valeriy Sokolov (viola)
Alexander Malofeev (piano)
Bournemouth Symphony Chorus
Tchaikovsky – Piano Concerto No.1
Balakirev – Islamey
Ivan Karabits – Concerto for Orchestra No.3
Kancheli - Styx

Wednesday 8 May, 730pm

Lighthouse, Poole

Kirill Karabits (conductor).
Tchaikovsky – lolanta
Featuring soprano Olga Kulchynska

Wednesday 15 May, 730pm

Lighthouse, Poole

Kirill Karabits (conductor)
Alexander Gavrylyuk (piano)
Bartók – The Miraculous Mandolin Suite
Prokofiev – Piano Concerto No.3
Shostakovich – Symphony No.5

Sunday 19 May

Royal Festival Hall, London (1pm)

Kirill Karabits (conductor)
Franghiz Ali-Zadeh: Nagilar (Fairy Tales)
Nurymov: Symphony No.2
Garayev: Seven Beauties Suite

Sunday 19 May

Royal Festival Hall, London (4pm)

Kirill Karabits (conductor)
Valeriy Sokolov (viola)
Harutyun Chkolyan, Karen Sirakanyan
(duduk/zurna)
Bournemouth Symphony Chorus
Kancheli - Styx for viola, chorus & orchestra
Terterian - Symphony No.3

Sunday 19 May

Royal Festival Hall, London (7.30pm)

Kirill Karabits (conductor)
de Hartmann - Suite from La Fleurette Rouge
Anna Korsun - Terricone
Lyatoshinsky - Symphony No.4

Friday 7 June, 7.30pm

Bristol Beacon

Kirill Karabits (conductor)
Liya Petrova (violin)
Karayev – The Seven Beauties Suite
Korngold – Violin Concerto
Dvořák – Symphony no.9 'From the New World'

3. About Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

www.bsolive.com | @BSOrchestra

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. Based at Lighthouse, Poole, it has residencies in Bournemouth, Bristol, Exeter, Portsmouth, Southampton and Yeovil — and is the largest cultural provider in the South West, serving one of the biggest and most diverse regions in the UK.

The Orchestra is known for pushing artistic boundaries and during Kirill Karabits' 15-year tenure as Chief Conductor its series of music from former Soviet states, Voices from the East, has continued 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.

The Orchestra's Digital Concerts have cemented its reputation for presenting live music of the highest quality, and in 2023/24 guest artists have included Artist-in-Residence Alexander Malofeev, Alina Ibragimova, and Awadagin Pratt. It reunited with Seeta Patel Dance in a Bharatanatyam interpretation of The Rite of Spring and gave world premieres by Jonathan Dove and Mark-Anthony Turnage on returning to its residency at Bristol Beacon.

The BSO leads hundreds of community-based events each year, from award-winning work in health settings to partnerships with education providers — and in 2023/24 it welcomed its second cohort of BSO Young Associate music leaders. Following international attention for igniting change, BSO Resound — the world's first professional disabled-led ensemble at the core of a major orchestra, and winner of the 2019 Royal Philharmonic Society's Impact Award — continues to challenge perceptions.

4. The BSO's Principal Broadcast Partner is **BBC Radio 3**
5. The BSO is **Classic FM**'s Orchestra in the South of England.