

PRESS RELEASE

Friday 22 November 2024

ORCHESTRA UNITES WITH DORSET COUNTY HOSPITAL AND ARTS IN HOSPITAL TO INJECT MUSIC INTO CARE



BSO musicians share music in Dorset County Hospital ©BSO

- A pilot programme between **Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO)**, **Dorset County Hospital**, and **Arts in Hospital** has reported positive impacts on the lives of patients and staff since its inception this summer.
- The programme, which has engaged both young and old in targeted weekly music-making sessions at Dorset County Hospital, is set to expand further into **Dorset HealthCare** sites in Poole and Sherborne in 2025.
- Star violinist, **Alena Baeva**, joins the programme when she visits the UK in late-November, performing in hospital wards and in recital to staff, patients and their families ahead of her BSO concert appearances.

A new programme designed to support people at Dorset County Hospital's Stroke Unit, Children's Ward, and Elderly Care Ward has reported positive results since its launch four months ago.

The programme has been created to inject music into healthcare systems, **breaking the boundaries between life in the hospital ward and the outside world.**

Activities have been devised between the BSO's musicians and healthcare practitioners. Therapists in the Stroke Unit have reported improved recovery through music-making, with **physical activities that mimic everyday life**, such as the shaking of maracas.

Staff working in the Children’s Ward have seen the impact of **music in calming younger patients, helping build connection to the outside world**. Older people and those with advanced dementia have taken part in group music making and singing and enjoyed bedside recitals in wards, **helping to ignite memories and conversations**, connecting patients, their families, and staff.

The BSO’s musicians have visited Dorset County Hospital weekly, since July, reporting **292 participations** in the programme in its initial phase.

The programme extends further across **Dorset HealthCare** sites in 2025. Music-making at Dorset County Hospital will connect with patients in other wards – plus, the programme expands to reach people in stroke rehabilitation at Sherborne’s **Yeatman Hospital** and patients living with advanced dementia at **Alderney Hospital** in Poole.

The Orchestra’s 2024/25 Artist-in-Residence – the **violinist Alena Baeva** – joins the programme on **26 November**, before appearing with the BSO in Poole (27 Nov) and Exeter (28 Nov). Baeva performs in hospital wards before giving a special recital for the Hospital’s staff, patients and families.

Considered one of the most exciting and captivating soloists on the concert stage today, Alena Baeva has performed with the world’s leading conductors and ensembles, the New York Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and London Philharmonic orchestras among them.

Matthew Bryant, Chief Executive, Dorset HealthCare and Dorset County Hospital, said: *“We are pleased to be working with the BSO on this exciting project. Music is such an important part of everyday life for so many people, and we want to bring music and other creative arts into the healthcare environment to help healing and rehabilitation, and to make the hospital environment feel more normal. We can already see the positive impact of this for patients, families and staff – the difference the BSO musicians can make to how people feel is truly inspiring.”*

Suzy Rushbrook, Arts in Hospital Manager said: *“We are delighted to be partnering with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra on this programme of musical activity. The aim is for improved health and wellbeing, through listening to and making music - the power of music and lyrics to prompt the memory are incredible. It’s fabulous to be able to expand our Creative Health programme in this way.”*

Lucy Warren, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra’s Joint Head of BSO Participate, said: *“We are proud to be working in close partnership with Dorset HealthCare, Arts in Hospital, and the incredible staff at Dorset County Hospital on this programme, which has created immediate and positive results within the hospital community. The live music-making in wards has relaxed young people and their families – and we’ve seen how singing has sparked memories and conversations for those living with dementia and offered both physical and emotional boosts to patients in rehabilitation in the Stroke Unit.*

“We are thrilled to welcome violinist Alena Baeva to Dorchester - when she visits the UK later this month, to share her world-class music with staff, patients and families – and look forward to deepening our connection with the Hospital’s community through music.”

Alena Baeva performs for Dorset County Hospital's patients, families and staff – on wards and in recital – later this month. Baeva performs with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra at Lighthouse, Poole [27 Nov] and Great Hall, University of Exeter [28 Nov]. For full details see bsolive.com

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

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1. High-resolution images available [here](#)
 - a) Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's musicians unite with patients and staff at Dorset County Hospital @BSO
 - b) Lucy Warren, the BSO's Joint Head of Participate @BSO
2. The BSO's programme of music in hospitals is generously supported by **Annette D'Abreo & Edwin Bessant**, and **The Alice Ellen Cooper Dean Charitable Foundation**.
3. **ABOUT BOURNEMOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** | bsolive.com

*Chief Conductor – Mark Wigglesworth | Artist-in-Residence — Alena Baeva
Principal Guest Conductor — Chloé van Soeterstède | Associate Guest Conductor – David Hill MBE
Conductor Laureate & Artistic Director, Voices from the East – Kirill Karabits
Conductor Laureate – Andrew Litton | Conductor Emeritus – Marin Alsop
Calleva Assistant Conductor – Enyi Okpara*

One of the UK's best-loved orchestras, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra is known for championing the role of culture in people's lives. Based at Lighthouse, Poole, the Orchestra is resident in Bristol, Exeter, Portsmouth, Southampton, and Yeovil, and performs in towns and villages across the region. It is the largest cultural provider in the Southwest of England, serving one of the biggest and most diverse regions in the UK.

Celebrated globally for his outstanding musicianship, extraordinary interpretations, and breadth of repertoire, **Mark Wigglesworth's appointment as Chief Conductor** (from autumn 2024) builds on the BSO's reputation for the highest quality music-making. The Orchestra boasts an enviable list of named conductors, including Principal Guest Conductor Chloé van Soeterstède, Marin Alsop, David Hill MBE, Kirill Karabits, and Andrew Litton.

Highlights of the season include concerto and chamber performances from Artist-in-Residence, the violinist **Alena Baeva**, and collaborations with Calleva Assistant Conductor, **Enyi Okpara**, who performs a broad mix of repertoire across the year. Guest artists include conductors Adam Hickox and Kevin John Edusei; pianist Nicholas McCarthy; and accordionist Ksenija Sidorova — and the Orchestra's celebrated Digital Concert series continues into its fifth year, with 17 live performances broadcast globally from Poole.

Committed to new music, the BSO has presented premiere performances of works by Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, Jonathan Dove, Magnus Lindberg, Anna Korsun, Elizabeth Ogonek, Shirley J. Thompson OBE, Mark-Anthony Turnage and Kate Whitley in recent years — and it's Voices from the East series has been recognised for unearthing lost symphonic works from eastern Europe and central Asia.

The BSO is known for championing access to high-quality music for all and leads hundreds of community-based events each year, from its award-winning work in health and care settings to partnerships with schools and music education hubs. In the 2024/25 season, it deepens its reach into local communities, including: a new residency in partnership with NHS Dorset; an expansion of its creative health work; and the extension of the BSO Young Associates community music training scheme. Following international attention for igniting change, BSO Resound



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— 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. **About Dorset County Hospital and Dorset HealthCare**

Dorset County Hospital and Dorset HealthCare are federated NHS foundation trusts.

Dorset HealthCare provides community health services covering physical and mental health across Dorset, Bournemouth, Poole and Southampton. Community health services include district nurses, health visitors, school nursing, end of life care, brain injury, sexual health promotion, safeguarding children, diabetes education, audiology, speech and language therapy, orthopaedic care and Dorset’s 12 community hospitals.

Dorset County Hospital was established in 1991 as part of a long-term project to bring together all the local services for acutely ill patients onto one hospital site. Our hospital, just outside Dorchester town centre, was completed in 1997. We were awarded Foundation Trust status in June 2007.

Our busy, modern hospital provides a full range of district general services, including an Emergency Department, and links with satellite units in five community hospitals. We are the main provider of acute hospital services to a population of around 300,000, living within Weymouth and Portland, the west and north of Dorset, and Purbeck. We also provide renal services for patients throughout Dorset and South Somerset; a total population of 850,000.

Our 3,500 members of staff work across various locations, including the main hospital in Dorchester, GP surgeries, schools, residential homes, people’s own homes and in the community hospitals. Dorset County Hospital has around 380 beds, seven main theatres and two day theatres, and has been designed with a major commitment to public art.

