

**PRESS RELEASE**

Thursday 14 November 2024

## **ORCHESTRA MARKS MUSICAL MILESTONE: 100 LIVE CONCERT BROADCASTS SINCE THE PANDEMIC**



*The BSO's Digital Concerts reach their 100<sup>th</sup> broadcast ©Corin Messer*

- Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra pivoted to global broadcasting in 2020 – on **4 December 2024**, it marks **100 Digital Concerts** from **Lighthouse, Poole**.
- The concerts are **broadcast in real time** – uniting online viewers with the in-hall audience – and are available to watch for 30 days.
- The performances **reach greater than concert hall capacity**, with around 2,500 people collectively experiencing each event.
- The Orchestra's **Chief Conductor, Mark Wigglesworth** conducts the musical milestone in Poole (4 Dec) alongside **pianist Boris Giltburg** before touring to Portsmouth Guildhall (5 Dec)

**When members of the public returned to concert halls in 2021, it was presumed demand for online concerts would soon dissipate. As the BSO prepares its 100<sup>th</sup> Digital Concert this December, its audiences continue to defy expectations.**

The BSO was one of the first major British orchestras to return to the stage on broadcasting its first livestreamed concert from Lighthouse, Poole on **30 September 2020**. Today, **nearly 2,500 people experience each of the events**: a core online audience of over 1,000 people joins up to 1,500 more at Lighthouse, Poole.

The Digital Concerts are broadcast on a Wednesday night, at 7.30pm. In 2024/25 – the BSO’s fifth season of live broadcasts – it shares **17 main season performances** with audiences around the world.

The broadcasts have captured historic moments, such as: **Kirill Karabits’s symphonic discoveries** from Ukraine and beyond; **horn player Felix Kleiser’s UK concerto debut** in November 2021; and the moment that **Stefan Jackiw’s violin bow snapped mid-performance before going viral**. The Orchestra has shared premiere performances with audiences far beyond Poole, Dorset – with new works by Anna Korsun and Kate Whitley’s *Falling* (written for BSO Resound, RNS Moves and full orchestra) among them.

Since 2020, the BSO has invested in its **in-house team, which has delivered the popular series** since its inception: five members of staff form unite with a professional sound engineer and presenter to deliver each concert. **Broadcaster Martin Handley** welcomed audiences to the first event in 2020 and introduces the Orchestra’s 100<sup>th</sup> broadcast, in December. Handley is a core part of the Orchestra’s team, which includes leading music broadcasters Catherine Bott, Katie Derham, Tom Service and Sarah Walker.

The concerts have reached **an estimated online audience of more than 150,000 since 2020**, boasting regular viewers from throughout the UK – and people in 118 countries, with the BSO’s most frequent international viewers based in the USA, Italy, France, Germany and South Korea.

**Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra’s Chief Executive, Dougie Scarfe OBE**, said: *“What has been achieved over the last four years has been completely extraordinary and an example of live music’s ability to connect and unite people – wherever they are in the world. The success of the broadcasts is testament to the special relationship between the BSO and its loyal audiences, without whom we would be nothing.*

*“There is clear evidence the series has made a deep impact on people’s lives – in particular, from people who would otherwise be unable to access live culture due to rural isolation, ill health, or disability. It has captured remarkable moments – such as when Kirill Karabits returned to the stage following the outbreak of war in Ukraine – and deepened our connection with education and care partners who access our music-making beyond the concert hall. As we look to our 100<sup>th</sup> Digital Concert and beyond it is with a deep sense of pride in the BSO’s musicians, staff, and audiences, who, together, continue to create these magical moments.”*

**Carol Paige, Section Principal Second Violin and Musician Trustee**, said: *“Every Wednesday evening I look out and see the most amazing sight - one that I will never take for granted following the pandemic - our wonderful audience! Knowing that almost the same number of people are watching and listening to our live broadcasts online feels very special; it’s an unexpected legacy of the last few years and one that has changed the way we now reach out to people around the UK and beyond.*

*“We’ve received a lot of very kind and generous comments from people who have been able to connect with us through our broadcasts; not only allowing us to keep music alive throughout the pandemic, but also allowing us to open up the concert hall to an entire audience that otherwise would not hear or see us play such wonderful music!”*

**Chief Conductor Mark Wigglesworth conducts the BSO's 100<sup>th</sup> Digital Concert – on Wednesday 4 December from Lighthouse, Poole. Tickets for online access £10. For full details see [bsolive.com](https://www.bsolive.com)**

**-ENDS-**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

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1. High-resolution images available [here](#)
  - a) Chief Conductor Mark Wigglesworth conducts the BSO on 4 December ©Corin Messer
  - b) Felix Klieser's memorable UK concerto debut marked a highlight ©Mark Allan
  - c) Stefan Jackiw's rare bow break was captured live before going viral in 2023 ©BSO
  - d) The BSO's Chief Executive Dougie Scarfe ©Corin Messer
  - e) The BSO in 2020, socially distanced and with a large stage extension ©Mark Allan

### **About the BSO's Digital Concert series**

- 100 Digital Concerts broadcast between 30 September 2020 and 4 December 2024. It has reached 118 countries, with the **UK, USA, Italy, France, Germany** and **South Korea** the most frequent viewers.
- **Quotes from online audience member:** *"Watching at home means we can continue to enjoy good music and, even though we aren't physically in the concert hall, we feel part of the performances and a little less isolated. It has been wonderful."*
- **Over 138,000 hours of material viewed** between 2020-24. According to Vimeo, the BSO's broadcasts have been **loaded over 1.6 million times**.
- **Almost 88,500 tickets have been sold** to households around the world, reaching an **estimated audience of over 150,000**. In its first season – in 2020/21, when audiences were not allowed to gather in halls – the Orchestra reached around 2,000 for many of its online-only events.
- Over 54% of viewers watch 45 minutes of video in one sitting – and almost 40% watch the concert in its entirety.
- The Orchestra's in-house team prepares an **average of 667 camera shots for each concert**, using up to 9 static cameras, 55 separate mics and an estimated 4 kilometres of cabling.
- 10 presenters have introduced the Orchestra's broadcasts, with an estimated **1,400 pages of script** written and featuring interviews from dozens of artists.
- The series **began on 30 September 2020** under the baton of the BSO's Associate Guest Conductor, David Hill. The programme featured: JS Bach arr. Karabits *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*; Ives' *Unanswered Question*; Mahler arr. Britten *What the Wild Flowers tell me*; and Beethoven's Seventh Symphony.
- The BSO marks its 100<sup>th</sup> broadcast under the baton of Chief Conductor Mark Wigglesworth on **4 December 2024** with the orchestral suite from Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker (Act 2)* and Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto with pianist Boris Giltburg.



- The Orchestra’s Digital Concerts are priced at **£10** (with full subscription discounts) and are **available to watch live and for 30 days**. It is estimated that 1.7 people access the BSO from each ticket sold.
- The BSO **reached 22,771 children** with a livestreamed performance of its **Explore the Orchestra Schools’ Concert** in spring 2024.
- The Orchestra’s initial investment in livestreaming equipment was made in the years prior to the pandemic, thanks to leading support from **Talbot Village Trust** and **The Pointer Family Trust**. The original objective was to ensure that more children regionally and nationally could take part in the Orchestra’s popular Schools’ Concerts. This existing infrastructure enabled the BSO to adapt quickly to livestreaming its symphonic concert series in 2020, and since then BSO Digital has been generously supported by the **Garfield Weston Foundation** through the **Weston Culture Fund**, **The Foyle Foundation**, **Annette D’Abreo & Edwin Bessant**, **Kelvyn Derrick**, **Christine & Jim Dipple**, **Steve Edge & Jane Fogg**, and **Roger Keyworth**.

## 2. **ABOUT BOURNEMOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** | [bsolive.com](https://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 — 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.

