

PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday 15 January 2025

THOUSANDS OF PUPILS TO ENJOY LIVE SYMPHONIC MUSIC AS TOUR HITS BRISTOL, EXETER AND PORTSMOUTH THIS MONTH

Plus, events for GCSE Music students in **Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, and Somerset**



Students experiencing live symphonic music © Corin Messer

- Pupils of all ages are set to get a taste of live music as **Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra** (BSO) tours its popular educational events across the South West in January and February.
- ‘Explore the Orchestra’ – designed for primary-aged pupils – visits **Bristol Beacon** [17 Jan], **Portsmouth Guildhall** [23 Jan] and the **University of Exeter’s Great Hall** [31 Jan]
- A live concert designed for GCSE Music pupils visits **Bournemouth** [4 Feb], **Bristol** [3 Feb], **Plymouth** [10 Feb], **Cullompton** [11 Feb], **Gloucester** [6 Feb], and **Yeovil** [5 Feb].

This month, thousands of pupils – from six to 16 – will get a first taste of live music, as Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra tours the South West with its popular series of free concerts for pupils.

Explore the Orchestra – primary pupils (Bristol, Exeter, Portsmouth)

The BSO’s ‘**Explore the Orchestra**’ event – designed for primary-aged pupils - visits Bristol, Exeter and Portsmouth, in late January. Pupils have prepared for the concert in classroom lessons - and they’ll have the chance to perform body percussion and sing in a mass interactive performance on the day, alongside composer James Redwood, writer and actor

Lynne Forbes, and the full orchestra, under the baton of its Calleva Assistant Conductor Enyi Okpara.

The event introduces children to a range of sea-themed music, with famous works from films, operas, and more. The series of concerts are **free to schools**, and the BSO has created resources for **teachers with Continued Professional Development [CPD] sessions** to support learning.

The events take place at: Bristol Beacon [Fri 17 Jan], Portsmouth Guildhall [Thurs 23 Jan] and the University of Exeter's Great Hall [Fri 31 Jan].

Explore the Orchestra is generously supported by the Skyrme Hart Charitable Trust, Dave & Jan Pointer, Sir Neville & Lady Simms, Christine & Jim Dipple and one anonymous supporter.

GCSE Music events (Bristol, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, and Somerset)

A series of chamber-scale live performances, tailored to secondary school pupils tours the South West from early February.

Created to support the GCSE Music curriculum, a group of seven musicians will perform 'set works' from the current GCSE syllabus. Presenter Patrick Bailey will help the pupils dissect the works to deepen their understanding of how and why they were created.

The BSO is providing additional in-school workshops and CPD session for teachers in Somerset schools, in partnership with The Octagon, Yeovil.

The tour visits: St Michael's Centre, Stoke Gifford, Bristol [Mon 3 Feb]; Bournemouth School for Girls [Tues 4 Feb]; Westlands Centre, Yeovil [Wed 5 Feb]; Gloucester Guildhall [Thur 6 Feb]; Lipson Cooperative Academy, Plymouth [Mon 10 Feb]; Uffculme School, Cullompton [Tues 11 Feb].

The BSO is grateful to its music education partners across the South West in the coordination of both *Explore the Orchestra* and GCSE Music events: **Devon Music Education Hub; Dorset and Somerset Music Hubs** (as part of The Octagon Music Hub); **Make Music Gloucestershire** (as part of the GSW Hub); **The Octagon Theatre, Yeovil; Soundstorm Music Education Agency, the South Coast Music Partnership, Portsmouth Guildhall, University of Exeter, West of England Music and Arts and Bristol Beacon.**

Bea Hankey, Joint Head of BSO Participate, said:

"Generations of concert lovers have enjoyed their first taste of live music thanks to Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's educational events – and we're thrilled to bring these to life for thousands more pupils this year, in concert halls, schools and community centres across the South West. Bringing music into people's lives is why the BSO exists: there's nothing like the look on children's faces when they hear a full symphony orchestra in flight for the first time – or the focus, as ideas come to life for GCSE Music students, when a life's

passion is ignited. Interactive and full of fun, we can't wait to share our live music with pupils across the region this winter!"

'Explore the Orchestra' takes place at Bristol Beacon [17 Jan], Portsmouth Guildhall [23 Jan] and the University of Exeter's Great Hall [31 Jan] – see bsolive.com for booking details.

GCSE Music concerts take place in Bristol [3 Feb], Bournemouth [4 Feb], Plymouth [10 Feb], Cullompton [11 Feb], Gloucester [6 Feb], and Yeovil [5 Feb] – contact hello@bsorchestra.co.uk for availability.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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1. High-resolution images available [here](#)
 - a) Students explore the orchestra © Corin Messer
 - b) Bea Hankey, Joint Head of BSO Participate ©BSO
2. **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 — 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.