

PRESS RELEASE

Thursday 24 April 2025

**MARK WIGGLESWORTH CELEBRATES FIRST YEAR AT THE HELM OF
BOURNEMOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA WITH BBC PROMS PERFORMANCE**



Pianist Nicholas McCarthy with Mark Wigglesworth and the BSO ©Mark Allan

- Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO) celebrates its first season with **Chief Conductor Mark Wigglesworth** in a live broadcast performance from this year's **BBC Proms** festival [20 July].
- **Pianist Nicholas McCarthy** – who made history in 2012, when he became the first one-handed pianist to graduate from the Royal College of Music – reunites with Wigglesworth and the Orchestra in Ravel's *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand*.
- The concert – which broadcasts live on **BBC Radio 3** and **BBC Sounds** and the same evening on **BBC TV** - includes Shostakovich's *Suite for Variety Orchestra* and Walton's highly-charged First Symphony.

Mark Wigglesworth's opening concert as the BSO's Chief Conductor was described by The Daily Telegraph as "a fine, fierce debut". He reunites with pianist Nicholas McCarthy and the Orchestra to share music by Ravel and Walton at the BBC Proms this summer.

One of today's most inspiring pianists, **Nicholas McCarthy** has received acclaim not only for his dazzling concert performances, but for using his platform to create change. He helped the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) launch its first syllabus for one-handed pianists last year and has carved a successful career as a motivational speaker.

McCarthy performs Ravel's *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand*, a work commissioned by his hero – the pianist Paul Wittgenstein – who built the repertoire for left-hand alone piano following the loss of his right

arm in World War I. McCarthy performed the concerto with Mark Wigglesworth and the BSO last November, with The Guardian praising his “*total command of the pianism that Ravel demands*”

The concert opens with **Shostakovich’s Suite for Variety Orchestra**, an eight-movement work that features music from the composer’s film and stage scores. It concludes with **Walton’s First Symphony**, a piece that erupted onto the scene in 1935 and has remained popular with audiences and musicians ever since. Wigglesworth conducted the symphony in his debut as Chief Conductor last November – a performance that received critical acclaim.

Mark Wigglesworth’s first season as the Orchestra’s Chief Conductor has included a shared Brahms cycle with Principal Guest Conductor Chloé Van Soeterstède and featured collaborations with pianists Boris Giltburg and Sir Stephen Hough and violinist Alena Baeva (the BSO’s 24/25 Artist-in-Residence) in Basingstoke, Bristol, Exeter, Poole and Portsmouth. Violinist Clara-Jumi Kang also unites with Wigglesworth and the Orchestra in early May, in Poole and Portsmouth.

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra’s Chief Conductor Mark Wigglesworth said:

“I am so looking forward to performing at the Proms with the BSO at the end of our first season together. To showcase this amazing orchestra’s talents in such an iconic national venue will be a wonderful way to share the musical connection I feel we have so enjoyably begun to establish.”

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra’s Chief Executive, Dougie Scarfe OBE, said:

“Audiences in the South West have enjoyed a terrific first season with Mark Wigglesworth as the Orchestra’s Chief Conductor. We’ve witnessed some truly electric collaborations, including with Nicholas McCarthy, who united with Mark in those first performances last autumn to great acclaim. We can’t wait to return to the BBC Proms and share the magic that has been taking place across the region this year.”

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra’s performance with Chief Conductor Mark Wigglesworth and pianist Nicholas McCarthy broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 and BBC Sounds – on Sunday 20 July – and, the same evening, on BBC TV. For full details see bbc.co.uk/proms

[ENDS]

NOTES TO EDITORS

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1. High-resolution images available [here](#)
a) Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra with Chief Conductor Mark Wigglesworth and pianist Nicholas McCarthy ©Mark Allan

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. A leading arts charity, it is the largest cultural provider in the South West 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 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 its 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 through its BSO Participate programme: 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 **Dorset County Hospital** and **Arts in Hospital**; 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.

A **National Portfolio of Arts Council England**, the BSO is a registered charity and relies on generous philanthropic support from individual donors, gifts in wills, corporate partners, and charitable trusts and foundations. In 2024, the Orchestra was delighted to receive its largest ever funding pledge from a charitable trust: a grant award of £300,000 over three years (2025-27) from the **Garfield Weston Foundation** towards BSO Participate.