

PRESS RELEASE

16 SEP 2025

Fa-la-la-la-la in love with symphonic music this Christmas!



Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra shares festive music this winter

- The BSO brings a magical series of concerts to **Bristol, Exeter, Fareham, Poole, Portsmouth, Southampton, Taunton** and **Weymouth** this festive season.
- Music for all ages includes **Last Night of the Christmas Proms [19, 20, 22 Dec]** with the West-End's *Frozen* star **Jenna Lee-James**, and a musical **Winter Wonderland [13 Dec]** with Southampton-based community choir, BSO Voices.
- Traditional festive favourites comprise of **Handel's *Messiah* [17 Dec]**, a **Celebration of Christmas Carols [23 Dec]** and **New Year's Gala** performances **[1-10 Jan]**.

Join Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra for music that will have you dancing in the aisles and jingling all the way home this festive season, plus, traditional favourites to celebrate together.

The BSO musicians herald in the festive season with a note-worthy line up of jubilant favourites in concert halls across the South West.

Popular Favourites

Star of the West End's *Frozen The Musical*, Jenna Lee-James, joins forces with popular conductor Pete Harrison in performances of **Last Night of the Christmas Proms** in

Exeter [19 Dec], Poole [20 Dec] and Portsmouth [22 Dec]. Audiences are encouraged to don a Christmas jumper, and dance in the aisles if they wish!

In Southampton, a festive **Winter Wonderland** awaits — with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra’s Southampton-based community choir, BSO Voices. With classics such as *Jingle Bell Rock*, *The 12 Days of Christmas* as well as popular music including a *Wicked Medley* — this vibrant community choir is sure to lift your spirits this Christmas.

Musical Traditions

Firm favourite of the seasonal calendar, Handel’s glorious Oratorio, *Messiah*, is a cherished mainstay at Lighthouse, Poole. This year it is to be performed under the baton of renowned conductor David Bates and features acclaimed soprano Anna Dennis.

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra’s Chief Conductor Mark Wigglesworth takes to the helm as a flurry of Viennese-inspired **New Year’s** concerts visit **Poole [1 Jan], Taunton [2 Jan], Bristol [3 Jan] and Fareham [10 Jan]** alongside soprano Elizabeth Watts. Enyi Okpara conducts in **Weymouth [9 Jan]**. Expect glittering concerts celebrating the music of Strauss that will have you waltzing into the New Year in true Viennese style!

Sing your heart out

A beloved **Celebration of Christmas Carols** sing-along takes place just prior to Christmas day at Lighthouse, Poole [23 Dec]. Gather friends and family for this joyful night of carols and raise the rooftops together with Christmas classics such as *O Come All Ye Faithful*, *Good King Wenceslas*, *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*, *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* and many more.

Dougie Scarfe, OBE, Chief Executive of Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra said:

“Music is deeply entwined with the festive season, and our seasonal concerts are designed to bring people together to celebrate in the most magical way. The awe-inspiring wonder of live music unites like nothing else, and we’d absolutely love for you to join us in the concert halls this festive season to experience a little bit of the magic!”

[ENDS]

NOTES TO EDITORS

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1. High-resolution images available [here](#)
 - a) Musicians of the BSO share festive music © BSO
 - b) Chief Conductor Mark Wigglesworth © Mark Allan
 - c) Calleva Assistant Conductor, Enyi Okpara © Frances Marshall
 - d) Singer Jenna Lee-James © Fiona Whyte
 - e) Soprano Elizabeth Watts © Marco Borggreve
 - f) Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra CEO, Dougie Scarfe © Corin Messer
2. Concert listings – full details see <https://bsolive.com/whats-on/>

Sat 13 Dec 2025 (O2 Guildhall Southampton)

Winter Wonderland

Pete Harrison *conductor*

BSO Voices

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Selection of festive hits performed by Southampton-based community choir and the full BSO

Wed 17 Dec 2025 (Lighthouse, Poole)

Messiah

David Bates *conductor*

Anna Dennis *soprano*

Bethany Horak-Hallett *mezzo-soprano*

Anthony Gregory *tenor*

William Thomas *bass*

Bournemouth Symphony Chorus and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Fri 19 Dec 2025 (Exeter University Great Hall)

Last Night of the Christmas Proms

Pete Harrison *conductor*

Jenna Lee-James *singer*

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Selection of festive hits

Sat 20 Dec 2025 (Lighthouse, Poole)

Last Night of the Christmas Proms

Pete Harrison *conductor*

Jenna Lee-James *singer*

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Selection of festive hits

Mon 22 Dec 2025 (Portsmouth Guildhall)

Last Night of the Christmas Proms

Pete Harrison *conductor*

Jenna Lee-James *singer*

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Selection of festive hits

Tues 23 Dec 3pm & 7pm 2025 (Lighthouse, Poole)

Celebration of Christmas Carols

Gavin Carr *conductor*

Bournemouth Symphony Chorus
Bournemouth Symphony Youth Chorus
Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra
Christmas Carol sing-a-long

Thurs 1 Jan 2026 (Lighthouse, Poole)

Fri 2 Jan 2026 (Taunton Brewhouse)

Sat 3 Jan 2026 (Bristol Beacon)

Sat 10 Jan (Fareham Live)

New Year's Day Viennese Gala

Mark Wigglesworth *conductor*

Elizabeth Watts *soprano*

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Music from Johann Strauss II, Josef Strauss and Franz Lehar

Fri 9 Jan (Weymouth Pavilion)

New Year Viennese Gala

Enyi Okpara *conductor*

Elizabeth Watts *soprano*

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Music from Johann Strauss II, Josef Strauss and Franz Lehar

3. **About Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra** | bsolive.com

Chief Conductor – Mark Wigglesworth | **Artist-in-Residence — Roderick Williams OBE**

Principal Guest Conductor — Chloé Van Soeterstède | **Associate Guest Conductor – David Hill MBE**

Conductor Laureate & Artistic Director, Voices from the East – Kirill Karabits OBE

Conductor Emeritus – Marin Alsop | **Conductor Laureate – Andrew Litton**

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.

The Daily Telegraph described Mark Wigglesworth's opening performance as Chief Conductor in 2024 as "*a fine, fierce debut*". Celebrated globally for his outstanding musicianship, extraordinary interpretations, and breadth of repertoire, Wigglesworth's first season has magnified 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.

In 2025/26, the BSO welcomes baritone **Roderick Williams OBE** as Artist-in-Residence: Williams performs five times across the season, including Zemlinsky's *Lyric Symphony*, Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, and a 24-song cycle, *An English Winterreise*. The Orchestra also introduces **Dani Howard** as its Celebrated Composer, a series that shines a spotlight on new British music. It shares seven performances of Howard's music, including the UK premiere of her *Saxophone Concerto* with **Jess Gillam**. Further highlights of the season include debut performances from organist **Anna Lapwood**, cellist **Hugo Svedberg**, guitarist **Plínio Fernandes**, viola player **Timothy Ridout**, among more. The Orchestra's celebrated **Digital Concert series** continues into its sixth year, with 19 live performances broadcast globally from Poole.

The Orchestra is celebrated for its pioneering community-based **BSO Participate** work, spanning partnerships with health and care providers to inclusive events in schools and with music education hubs. In the 2025/26 season, highlights include the expansion of its creative health programme with **Dorset County Hospital** and **Arts in Hospital** into further **Dorset HealthCare** sites, and an extension of its support for **Community and Wellbeing**

Orchestras supporting a range of needs across the region from Bodmin, Boscombe and Bristol to Chard and Wincanton.

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. The group unites with Calleva Assistant Conductor Enyi Okpara and members of the **National Open Youth Orchestra** to share its live music in schools in 2025/26.

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.

The BSO's Principal Broadcast Partner is **BBC Radio 3**.

The BSO is **Classic FM's** Orchestra in the South of England.