

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 28 April 2026

**BOURNEMOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES
MICHAL OREN AS 2026/27 CALLEVA ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR**



*Semi-finalists of the BSO's 2026 Calleva Assistant Conductor Competition:
Max Todes, Oliver Cope, **Michal Oren**, Jacobus de Jager ©BSO*

- **Michal Oren** is announced as Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's **Calleva Assistant Conductor** ahead of its 2026/27 season.
- Two days of auditions took place at **Lighthouse, Poole** with 7 shortlisted candidates competing for the position. The winner was selected by a vote from the Orchestra's musicians.
- **Oliver Cope** was voted in second place, with semi-finalists **Jacobus de Jager** and **Max Todes**.
- The **bursary-supported training position** provides a broad mix of performance opportunities and mentoring, including from the Orchestra's world-leading guest conductors and musicians.

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO) announces Michal Oren as its Calleva Assistant Conductor. The role, which received more than 140 applications, offers next generation conductors the opportunity to catapult their career.

Currently based in London, Oren completed her professional studies with Sian Edwards at the Royal Academy of Music, where she held the Bianca Falcone Sorrell Award. She gained her master's degree from the Royal College of Music, as a full scholar, and studied both conducting and clarinet at the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music in Tel-Aviv. She has held positions at Opera North (Female Conductor Trainee 2024/25) and has assisted at the Royal Northern Sinfonia. She was recently announced as a semi-finalist in the 80th Concours de Genève Conducting Competition.

Over the course of the tenure, Michal Oren will conduct the BSO and work closely with the Orchestra's Chief Conductor **Mark Wigglesworth** and members of the artistic team, which includes **Chloé Van Soeterstède** (Principal Guest), **David Hill MBE** (Associate Guest), **Kirill Karabits** (Conductor Laureate), **Marin Alsop** (Conductor Emeritus) and **Andrew Litton** (Conductor Laureate).

Michal Oren follows in the steps of conductors **Marta Gardolińska**, **Tom Fetherstonhaugh** and current post holder, **Enyi Okpara**.

Michal Oren, the BSO's 2026/27 Calleva Assistant Conductor said:

"I'm looking forward to joining the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra as Calleva Assistant Conductor. As a young conductor you need time on the podium to grow, and I am deeply grateful to have this opportunity with the BSO. This week has marked my first time in the region; everyone has been so welcoming and I'm excited to get to know the musicians and audiences over the coming months ahead."

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

"We've enjoyed witnessing this extraordinary group of conductors over the past two days – and we're delighted to announce Michal Oren as our 2026/27 Calleva Assistant Conductor."

"Thanks to the support of The Calleva Foundation, the BSO is proud to offer this platform upon which next generation conductors can elevate to the next stage in their professional journey under the guidance of our brilliant artistic team, led by Chief Conductor Mark Wigglesworth. In one of the best finals we've ever had in this competition, Michal's musicianship and connection to the brilliant players of the BSO stood out and we can't wait to return to the stage with them in our upcoming season."

The Calleva Assistant Conductor programme in 2024-2030 is funded by The Calleva Foundation, in memory of Jack Butt. Trustees Stephen and Caroline Butt said: *"Supporting the Calleva Assistant Conductor programme is our investment in the next generation of outstanding young artists, and we're delighted to welcome Michal Oren to the role."*

[ENDS]

Notes to Editors:

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1. Shortlisted candidates included:
 - Oliver Cope
 - Jacobus de Jager
 - Kinga Głowacka
 - Michal Oren
 - Matthew Rhodes
 - Max Todes
 - Sebastian Zinca
2. Images available [here](#)
 - a) Michal Oren, the BSO's 2026/27 Calleva Assistant Conductor ©BSO
 - b) The BSO at Bristol Beacon ©Mark Allan
 - c) Dougie Scarfe OBE DL, Chief Executive of the BSO ©Corin Messer
3. **About Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra www.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 performing organisation 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 **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 Organisation 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.