

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 11 August 2026

Spectacular music and picnics as the BSO's Proms in the Park concerts welcomed almost 7,000 people into heart of town



BSO Proms in the Park ©Corin Messer

- Almost **7,000 people** came through the gates of **Meyrick Park** to celebrate live music
- *Now That's What I Call Symphonic Music!* highlighted leading composers and movies
- *Symphonic Smash Hits – the 90s!* celebrated the decade's top pop artistes
- Calleva Assistant Conductor Enyi Okpara concluded two-year stint with BSO

Thousands of revellers enjoyed a weekend of extraordinary music as Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's Summer Pops open air concerts in Meyrick Park proved to be a resounding success.

The two-night al fresco event, sponsored by **Lester Aldridge Solicitors** and featuring symphonic and movie classics and 1990s smash hits, attracted huge audiences who enjoyed sumptuous picnics and watched spectacular pyrotechnics finales.

BSO Proms in the Park 2026, supported by **BCP Council**, features some of the UK's best musicians and has once again proved to be an outstanding highlight of the summer season, made even more enjoyable by the glorious weather

Friday's *Now That's What I Call Symphonic Music!* celebrated big name composers from Stravinsky and Johann Strauss to Mussorgsky and Vaughan Williams as well as blockbuster movie soundtrack

champions John Williams, Hans Zimmer and Howard Shore. The evening also marked the conclusion of Calleva Assistant Conductor **Enyi Okpara**'s two-year tenure with the BSO.

On Saturday it was the turn of the **BSO Pops Orchestra** and four guest singers under the baton of popular conductor **Pete Harrison** to perform *Symphonic Smash Hits – the 90s!* which included tracks by the likes of Robbie Williams, The Spice Girls, Blur, Oasis and Wet Wet Wet.

Anthony Brown, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's Head of Marketing and Digital, said:

"Our wonderful musicians proved yet again just how brilliantly versatile they are over two fantastic evenings of unforgettable music as we once again turned Bournemouth's Meyrick Park into a fully functioning venue to accommodate top quality musicians and thousands of revellers."

"We're grateful to our sponsors Lester Aldridge Solicitors and supporters at BCP Council for their belief in the power of live music – and to our extraordinary audiences. It was a real buzz to see people come to the events laden with picnic baskets full of food and drink, tables, chairs and rugs – which was no mean feat in this heat – as they took time out the everyday to create lasting memories together."

The Orchestra performs weekly at **Lighthouse, Poole** from 30 September through until spring – and many of its symphonic concerts are also available to watch live and on-demand as Digital Concerts.

Highlights of Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's upcoming 2026/27 season include the launch of a two-year Beethoven series, the arrival of Grammy-award winning Thomas Adès as Celebrated Composer and Gramophone award-winning pianist Boris Giltburg as Artist-in-Residence – plus, the arrival of new Calleva Assistant Conductor, Michal Oren.

See bsolive.com for full details.

[ENDS]

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NOTES TO EDITORS

For more information please contact:

Cliff Moore | Cliff.Moore@deepsouthmedia.co.uk | 07469 158458 or

Claire Rawles | crawles@bsorchestra.co.uk | 07860 776646

1. High-resolution images available on request. Photography: ©Corin Messer



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2. About Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra | bsolive.com

Chief Conductor – Mark Wigglesworth
Celebrated Composer – Thomas Adès | Artist-in-Residence – Boris Giltburg
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 – Michal Oren

One of the UK's best-loved orchestras, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO) 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 registered 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.

Mark Wigglesworth became the Orchestra's Chief Conductor in 2024, and his opening seasons have 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** alongside **Marin Alsop, David Hill MBE, Kirill Karabits, Andrew Litton** and new Calleva Assistant Conductor, **Michal Oren**.

In 2026/27, the BSO welcomes **Thomas Adès** as its *Celebrated Composer*, in a series that shines a spotlight on new British music. The Orchestra shares eight performances, including one that Adès conducts – and local pupils will interact with his music through further events.

The Orchestra's **two-year Beethoven celebration: Road to Joy** runs from October 2026. Alongside symphonic performances, the series provides three immersive *Beethoven Now* weekends, delving deeper into the enduring legacy of the composer's music and humanity.

The BSO welcomes pianist **Boris Giltburg** as *Artist-in-Residence*, with five performances across the season. Further highlights include debut performances from conductor **Charlotte Corderoy**, pianists **Junyan Chen, Eva Gevorgyan, Isata Kanneh-Mason**, and violinist **Johan Delane**. The BSO's celebrated **Digital Concert series** continues into its seventh year, with 18 live performances broadcast globally from Poole – this year, supported by **Digital Concert Sponsor, Lark Music**.

Celebrated for its pioneering community-based **BSO Participate** work, the Orchestra brings music into people's lives beyond the concert hall thanks to a network of partnerships spanning health, care and music education; with a unique team of dynamic **BSO Associate** and **Young Associate Musicians** living in the heart of communities across the South West, it delivered more than 58,000 experiences last year. Its creative health programme continues to expand, with regular sessions at **Dorset County Hospital, Dorset HealthCare** sites, and **University Hospital Southampton**. Several **Community and Wellbeing Orchestras** support a range of needs across the region from Bodmin, Boscombe and Bristol to Chard, Exeter, Newquay 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, continues to challenge perceptions. The group joins conductors **Tom Fetherstonhaugh** and **Enyi Okpara** in 2026/27.

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.



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