

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 29 September 2026

ROAD TO JOY: FANS OF ORCHESTRAL MUSIC EMBARK ON TWO-YEAR BEETHOVEN SPECIAL FROM THIS WEEK



Mark Wigglesworth conducts the BSO ©Soul Media/Jessie Myers

- Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's 2026/27 concert season launches this week – at **Lighthouse, Poole** [Wed 30 Oct] and **Bristol Beacon** [Thurs 1 Oct] – opening the Orchestra's two-year landmark Beethoven series, *Road to Joy*.
- The celebratory chapter sees the BSO announce a **four-year extension of its partnership with Chief Conductor, Mark Wigglesworth**, which sees him at the helm until 2032.
- The Orchestra also announces **Lark Music** as its first **Digital Concert Series Sponsor**: the popular live broadcast series reaches thousands more people beyond the concert hall each year.
- Audiences welcome Celebrated Composer **Thomas Adès** and Artist-in-Residence **Boris Giltburg**, among the glittering line-up to visit the South West this year.

The BSO's upcoming *Road to Joy* season promises a deep dive into one of music's most iconic and intriguing disruptors: Ludwig van Beethoven. The landmark series comes as the Orchestra deepens its partnership with Chief Conductor Mark Wigglesworth and enters a new chapter with Lark Music.

The launch of ***Road to Joy*** embodies the BSO's artistic relationship with its Chief Conductor, Mark Wigglesworth; the forthcoming series heralding both insightful symphonic performances and thought-provoking discussion-led events across the coming two years.

Appointed to the role in 2024, Mark Wigglesworth was formerly the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor (2021-2024). One of the world's leading conductors, he is recognised for his outstanding musicianship, extraordinary interpretations, and breadth of repertoire.

Among highlights as Chief Conductor, Mark Wigglesworth has introduced the BSO's Celebrated Composer strand, showcasing music written by living British composers. In 2025/26, the BSO featured performances of **Dani Howard's** music and this season it welcomes **Thomas Adès**.

The BSO will also celebrate music from an earlier time, as the world marks the bicentenary of Beethoven's death in 2027.

At its core, the *Road to Joy* series includes Beethoven's nine symphonies and introduces **three immersive weekends, *Beethoven Now***, exploring the composer's universal relevance to who we are today. The first *Beethoven Now* weekend [31 Oct-1 Nov] features guest speakers: musician **Dame Evelyn Glennie**; broadcaster **Jonathan Dimbleby**; author **John Suchet**; and actor **Samuel West**.

This week, Mark Wigglesworth launches the series with an opening performance partnering **Beethoven's First Symphony** with ***The Ring: An Orchestral Adventure*** – Henk de Vlieger's orchestral arrangement of Wagner's defining work – at **Lighthouse, Poole** [Wed 30 Sept] and **Bristol Beacon** [Thurs 1 Oct]. The Poole concert is available to watch live and on demand for 30 days.

The new season also sees a deepening of the BSO's relationship with longstanding partner **Lark Music**, as the leading musical instrument insurance specialist becomes **Digital Concert Series Sponsor**.

Lark Music has supported the BSO over a number of years on key initiatives including its BSO Young Associates programme, Symphony from Scratch and the BSO Music-Making Competition. This year, by sponsoring the Digital Concert series, Lark Music is helping the BSO support musicians and music lovers, who are unable to attend a concert hall, to experience live orchestral music from their own homes. Last season, the BSO's Digital Concert series reached an estimated online audience of 32,000.

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's Chief Conductor, Mark Wigglesworth, said:

"I have total respect and admiration for the musicians and management of the BSO. To be able to continue to develop the work we are doing together is enormously exciting and it is a real privilege to be able to share our music-making with our curious, supportive, and passionate audiences across the whole of the South West of England."

Lark Music Insurance's Partnership Account Executive, Brian Hillstead, said:

'At Lark Music, we believe music should be accessible to everyone, wherever they are. We've long admired how Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's Digital Concerts enable more people to experience

world-class performances beyond the concert hall. As a longstanding partner, we're proud to become the first sponsor of the Digital Concert Series and help more people engage with live music."

Dougie Scarfe OBE DL, the **BSO's Chief Executive**, said:

"We are deeply proud of what has been achieved at the BSO over the past two years with our extraordinary Chief Conductor, Mark Wigglesworth – and, as we enter a new season, we're thrilled to celebrate our ongoing commitment to taking the very best live music to audiences and communities across the South West.

"Last year, an estimated 32,000 people viewed our symphonic Digital Concerts around the world, and we know that many of those people would not otherwise be able to attend a concert hall. At the heart of the BSO is a commitment to ensuring everyone can access our music, so we are equally excited to have entered a new partnership with our colleagues at Lark Music, as Digital Concert Series Sponsor as we begin our 'Road to Joy'."

Based at Lighthouse, Poole, Bournemouth Symphony 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.

The BSO launches its 2026/27 season – and *Road to Joy* series – at Lighthouse, Poole [Wed 30th Sept] and Bristol Beacon [Thurs 1 Oct]. The Poole performance is also available to watch live and on demand at bsolive.com

[ENDS]

NOTES TO EDITORS

For more information please contact:

Claire Rawles | crawles@bsorchestra.co.uk | +44(0)7860 776646 or

Edward Christian-Hare | Edward.Christian-Hare@premiercomms.co.uk | +44 (0)7870 859633

1. To find out more about how **Lark Music** and the BSO work together and be the first to see exclusive insights and updates, visit and bookmark larkmusic.com/bso
2. [Road to Joy autumn 2026 event listings](#) – full booking at bsolive.com
**also available to watch live online as a Digital Concert*

Wednesday 30 September, 7.30pm

Lighthouse, Poole*

Beethoven – Symphony No.1

Wagner arr.de Vlieger – *The Ring: An Orchestral Adventure*

Mark Wigglesworth, conductor

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Thursday 1 October, 7pm

Bristol Beacon

Beethoven – Symphony No.1

Wagner arr.de Vlieger – *The Ring: An Orchestral Adventure*

Mark Wigglesworth, *conductor*

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Saturday 31 October, 1.30pm

Canford School, Dorset

Beethoven Now

Learn more about Beethoven the man through readings, performances and discussion. Broadcaster Sarah Walker introduces guest speakers including Mark Wigglesworth, Dame Evelyn Glennie, Jonathan Dingleby, John Suchet, and Samuel West.

Sunday 1 November, 1.30pm

Bristol Beacon

Beethoven Now

Learn more about Beethoven the man through readings, performances and discussion. Broadcaster Tom Service introduces guest speakers including Mark Wigglesworth, Dame Evelyn Glennie, Jonathan Dingleby, John Suchet, and Samuel West.

Wednesday 4 November, 7.30pm

Lighthouse, Poole*

Prokofiev – Symphony No.1 ‘Classical’

Schumann – Piano Concerto

Beethoven – Symphony No.2

Mark Wigglesworth, *conductor*

Boris Giltburg, *piano*

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Thursday 5 November, 7pm

Bristol Beacon

Prokofiev – Symphony No.1 ‘Classical’

Schumann – Piano Concerto

Beethoven – Symphony No.2

Mark Wigglesworth, *conductor*

Boris Giltburg, *piano*

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

3. **High-resolution images available [here](#):**

- a) Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra with Mark Wigglesworth ©Soul Media/Jessie Myers
- b) Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra with Mark Wigglesworth ©Mark Allan
- c) Dougie Scarfe OBE ©Corin Messer

4. **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

Callewa 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 **Southampton Hospitals Charity**. 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.

bsolive.com

5. **About Lark Music – Digital Concert Series Sponsor** | larkmusic.com

Lark Music, an established brand within Howden, is a specialist music insurance provider, protecting musicians and their instruments for over 35 years with tailored cover and expert support. Whether you play at home, perform on stage or travel the world with your musical instruments, Lark Music's insurance is designed to give you confidence that your instruments are fully protected. From accidental knocks to theft or accidental loss, we cover the risks that matter most to musicians, so you can focus on playing, not worrying.