

PRESS RELEASE

Thursday 8 October 2026

MUSIC COMES TO LIFE FOR THOUSANDS OF PUPILS FROM CORNWALL TO THE ISLE OF WIGHT IN FREE EVENTS



Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's popular schools' events return ©BSO

- **Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO) launches events for teachers and pupils** – primary-aged children to hear the full Orchestra in **Bristol, Devon, Dorset** and **Portsmouth**.
- Older pupils studying GCSEs and BTECs to hear music come alive in **Bristol, Eastleigh, Exeter, Gloucester, Newquay, Poole, Southampton, Swindon, Winchester** and **Yeovil**.
- Aspiring performers benefit: **inclusive music-making weekend *Symphony from Scratch*** returns to **Dorset**, and a *Come and Play* day in **Devon** – plus, the opportunity to meet pianists **Boris Giltburg** and **Isata Kanneh-Mason** ahead of their BSO concerts.

Young people are being encouraged to stretch their imagination, as a host of events to support learning – both in the classroom and beyond – return to the South West from this month.

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO) created **31,855 participations for children and young people** last year, with 200 events in 62 locations across the region. Its popular events – for school groups and aspiring performers – return for the new academic year to support communities throughout the region.

Schools and Music Education

A series of 90-minute **Key Stage 4 Concerts** – designed to help older pupils studying for GCSE and BTEC qualifications – returns this month. Pupils will hear familiar works come to life at an assembly hall or community hall near them: **Eastleigh** [13 Oct]; **Yeovil** [14 Oct]; **Newquay** [15 Oct]; **Exeter** [16 Oct]; **Poole** [9 Nov]; **Winchester** [10 Nov]; **Gloucester** [11 Nov]; **Swindon** [12 Nov]; **Southampton** [13 Nov]; **Bristol** [4 Feb]. Events are bookable via local Music Education Hubs.

A brand-new experience comes to Bournemouth, in spring. An **Open Rehearsal for Key Stage 3** pupils (11-14) displays the Orchestra in full flight as it prepares for its *Classic FM 'Hall of Fame'* performances with pianist **Isata Kanneh-Mason** and conductor **Tom Fetherstonhaugh**. A limited number of seats are available for the event [Bournemouth – 15 April]. The programme features some of the greatest works of popular classical music, including, Bernstein, Gershwin, and Piazzolla. Teachers can book spaces via the BSO's website.

Explore the Orchestra – the BSO's FREE series for **Key Stage 2 (primary-aged) pupils** – returns, this year inspired by the human voice. The full-scale symphonic concerts are presented by award-winning composer James Redwood and mezzo-soprano Fizz Buckland. *Explore the Orchestra: Sing Out!* delves into how vocalists and orchestras work together to tell stories in opera, theatre and the contemporary world. It introduces the orchestral families in an accessible way and showcases music from a variety of genres, as the audience learns to sing and perform together. The series is supported with CPD training and resource packs for classroom teachers, helping them to prepare pupils ahead of the event.

The full-symphonic concerts take place at **University of Exeter** [22 Jan], **Portsmouth Guildhall** [25 Feb], and **Bristol Beacon** [29 April] and feature two participatory songs – featuring Makaton signing and body percussion – composed especially for these concerts with schools in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole with partners **SoundStorm Music Education Agency** (BCP). *Explore the Orchestra: Dance, Dance, Dance* visits **Lighthouse, Poole** [18-19 May]. All *Explore the Orchestra* events can be booked via the BSO's website [bsolve.com].

Aspiring performers

Further opportunities provide young musicians with advice and learning from the BSO's professional musicians beyond the classroom.

Symphony from Scratch is an inclusive weekend of side-by-side music-making, designed to remove barriers. The event sees members of **National Open Youth Orchestra** (NOYO) join professional musicians from Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and **BSO Resound** alongside local amateur players. Together, the musicians create symphonic music as part of a large ensemble, culminating in an informal performance to family and friends. The event takes place at **Lighthouse, Poole** from 30-31 January 2027.

This vibrant programme is generously supported by the Garfield Weston Foundation, The Skyrme Hart Charitable Trust, Dave & Jan Pointer, The Steel Charitable Trust, Sir Neville & Lady Simms, Rivers Foundation, Scops Arts Trust, Christine & Jim Dipple, and The VEC Acorn Trust. *Symphony from Scratch* is sponsored by [Lark Music](#), a leading musical instrument insurance provider.

Gramophone Award-winning pianist Boris Giltburg visits Bristol Beacon [5 Nov] to perform Schumann's famous Piano Concerto. Young pianists taking part in an afternoon workshop with BSO Associate Musician Dr Jonathan James benefit from a Q&A session with Giltburg, as he shares insights into life as a global performer ahead of the public concert. Bookings are made via the Bristol Beacon Music Education Hub.

Two further experiences will see aspiring players in Devon benefit from the BSO's musicians. A **'Come and Play'** morning takes place at St Peter's School, Exeter [16 Oct], designed for Key Stage 4 pupils to experience playing alongside professional musicians.

The BSO's musicians will also work with young instrumentalists ahead of a performance of Carl Orff's enduringly popular *Carmina Burana*, at Exeter Cathedral [21 Nov]. The young musicians will benefit from coaching in Totnes ahead of the public performance, which features the BSO and Exeter Philharmonic Choir. The project is in partnership with the Devon Music Hub and Exeter Philharmonic Choir.

Lucy Warren, Head of BSO Participate, said:

"The BSO exists to bring music into people's lives – and children and young people are absolutely central to this. The Orchestra is renowned for inspiring pupils to think big and stretch their imagination, and we're proud this latest series events will do just that."

"Whether your pupils are preparing for GCSEs and BTECs, or smaller children embarking on their first experience of a full-scale symphony orchestra, the BSO is here to support you. We'll be in community halls and assembly halls and performing together: and if you're an aspiring musician keen to hear insights from world-class soloists or interested to be part of an inclusive orchestra featuring instruments that utilise assistive technology, you're bound to be inspired."

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.

Children and young people can access many of the Orchestra's main season concerts through its 'Kids for a Quid' scheme. In 2025/26, more than 14,800 under-18s attended a BSO concert for free or just £1.

Many of Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's 2026/27 events for children and young people are now available to book – see bsolive.com for full details.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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1. Event listings – full booking at bsolive.com

Explore the Orchestra Key Stage 2 concerts

Explore the Orchestra: Sing Out!

University of Exeter [Friday 22 January]

Portsmouth Guildhall [Thursday 25 February]

Bristol Beacon [Thursday 29 April]

Explore the Orchestra: Dance, Dance, Dance

Lighthouse, Poole [Tuesday 18 & Wednesday 19 May] – Poole booking from late November

Explore the Orchestra tickets can be reserved at bsolive.com

The Poole performance is also available to access via livestream.

Open Rehearsal – Classic FM Hall of Fame – for Key Stage 3 pupils

Bournemouth [Thursday 15 April]

Explore the Orchestra tickets can be reserved at bsolive.com

Key Stage 4 concerts for GCSE and BTEC pupils

Eastleigh [13 October] – Barton Peveril College

Yeovil [14 Oct] – Westlands Entertainment Centre

Newquay [15 Oct] – Treviglas Academy

Exeter [16 Oct] – St Peter's School

Poole [9 Nov] – Poole High School

Winchester [10 Nov] – Peter Symonds College

Gloucester [11 Nov] – Gloucester Guildhall

Swindon [12 Nov] – The Platform

Southampton [13 Nov] – Turner Sims

Bristol [4 Feb] – St Michael's Centre, Stoke Gifford

*Key Stage 4 music tour bookable via the **local Music Education Hub**.*

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



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Conductor Emeritus – Marin Alsop | Conductor Laureate – Andrew Litton
Calleva Assistant Conductor – Michal Oren

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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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