

COAST CHARACTER

Conducting a world-class orchestra based by the coast is very special, says Kirill Karabits, who celebrates his 10th anniversary at the helm of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

WORDS CLAIRE JACKSON PHOTOGRAPH NICK CARY/BSO

The life of a conductor is full of stress and travel, and being beside the sea helps me to recharge my batteries. I first came to Dorset in 2007 as a guest conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO). I didn't know what to expect – I had never been to the UK before. I conducted a series of concerts with the BSO and was made principal conductor in 2009.

The location influences my artistic programming – it doesn't mean that I'm always looking for music that is directly connected to the sea, such as Debussy's *La Mer*, but the environment helps to stimulate creativity. I often go to the beach to think about the scores I am

working on, and I know the musicians in the orchestra do the same thing. We never get tired of the sea views.

This part of the world remains unknown for many people. I am from the Ukraine, and when I say I am the conductor of the BSO, people ask me where Bournemouth is located. I am so fascinated by the area; sometimes I think British people keep it slightly secret to hide it for themselves. Despite the name, the orchestra is resident at the Lighthouse, Poole's Centre for the Arts. But we perform regularly at the Pavilion Theatre in Bournemouth, and all over the south coast – in Portsmouth, Exeter and beyond. Having a world-class orchestra based by the coast is special.

Generally speaking, you can have the orchestra or the beach – it's very rare that the two combine – especially at this level.

When I have free time I enjoy visiting Chesil Beach and exploring the Purbeck coast. My favourite places to walk are alongside Poole Quay, through Upton Country Park to Hamworthy Park, and along the beach from Sandbanks to Christchurch. I also enjoy fishing, and I plan to take sailing classes soon. I do lots of guest conducting all over the world, but I love to come back to my home in Poole.

To book tickets to see Kirill and the BSO perform, go to bsolive.com.

