

CHROMATICA

ORCHESTRA

Chromatica Orchestra appoints Oliver Cope as its first Principal Conductor

First performance: Wednesday 14 October 2026

- **Chromatica Orchestra** has appointed 27-year-old British conductor **Oliver Cope** as its first ever Principal Conductor.
- First Prize winner of two international conducting competitions, he has already worked with the Hallé, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the Bamberger Symphoniker.
- He takes up the role on Wednesday 14 October 2026, opening Chromatica's third season at Battersea Arts Centre.

Chromatica Orchestra today announces the appointment of Oliver Cope as its first Principal Conductor, one of the most decorated British conductors of his generation and, at 27, among the youngest to hold a titled post with a British orchestra.

He takes up the post on **Wednesday 14 October 2026**, opening the orchestra's third season at Battersea Arts Centre. His first programme traces the line from the film score to the concert hall: Herrmann's suite from *Psycho*, Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 9* and Korngold's *Violin Concerto* with South Korean violinist **Sarang Seohyun Kim**, who is making her UK orchestral debut and turns 18 on the day of the concert.

Oliver Cope comments: *"Chromatica has a wonderful sense of possibility: brilliant young musicians, adventurous programming and a real appetite to do things differently. I'm thrilled to be joining the orchestra and particularly excited by the chance to build a relationship with the players over the coming seasons, shaping programmes together and developing a distinctive artistic identity."*

Cope was chosen following auditions in July, in which four excellent conductors worked with the orchestra over two days. He emerged as the standout, with players, management and trustees all involved in the decision.

Oliver Cope takes the first titled conductor position in the orchestra's history and brings an unusually decorated early career to the role. He is a First Prize winner of both the Koussevitzky International Conducting Competition and the International Athens Conducting Competition, and took a prize at the 2026 Gustav Mahler Conducting Competition. He has already conducted the Hallé, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the Bamberger Symphoniker, and returns to Bamberg this season for a studio recording with BR-KLASSIK.

Speaking about the appointment, **Charles Lewington OBE**, Chairman of Chromatica Orchestra, said: *"Chromatica was founded on a simple idea: the next generation of brilliant musicians playing with the best emerging soloists, under the direction of one of their own. For the musicians, they delight in owning their own sound and technical quality; for paying audiences, the effect is thrilling. Appointing our first Principal Conductor from the post music college generation is the logical next step. Oliver brings the artistic ambition and energy this orchestra was built for, and I am delighted that he is joining us as we begin our third season."*

Chromatica Orchestra Founding Artistic Director **Peter Manning** added: *"It is a rare thing in the UK to see the successful building of a new orchestra. Our young professional musicians bring a deep and*

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innovative sense of what performance can be today. I am thrilled to introduce Oliver Cope as our Principal Conductor, and I look forward to making music together. Welcome, Oliver."

Season at a glance

The first half of Oliver Cope's first season as Principal Conductor will feature three concerts from October to December 2026:

- **Wednesday 14 October 2026, 7pm, Battersea Arts Centre.** Season opening and **Oliver Cope's** first concert as Principal Conductor. Bernard Herrmann's suite from *Psycho*, Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 9*, and Korngold's *Violin Concerto* with South Korean violinist **Sarang Seohyun Kim**. Kim was the youngest ever winner of the Tibor Varga International Competition, and this season makes her debuts with the Bergen Philharmonic and Lucerne Symphony.
- **Thursday 26 November 2026, 7pm, Battersea Arts Centre.** Osvaldo Golijov's *Last Round*, Poulenc's *Sinfonietta* and Daniel Soley's *Accordion Concerto* with **Ryan Corbett**, the first accordionist selected for the BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist scheme, who gave the work's world premiere.
- **Tuesday 22 December 2026, 7pm, Battersea Arts Centre.** A festive evening of music, stories and Christmas magic, where familiar favourites meet unexpected surprises. Featuring music and readings to delight audiences of all ages, this will be an evening to warm up even the coldest December chill.

The season continues in 2027 with a family concert on Wednesday 17 February – following sold out performances of *Carnival of the Animals* in 2025 and *Peter and the Wolf* in 2026 – and further concerts in the spring and summer. Dates, programmes and booking details will be announced later in the year.

Chromatica continues to build its community engagement this season, developing existing partnerships with the Music in Secondary Schools Trust (MiSST) and Bobby Moore Academy, and new collaborations with several South London music hubs. The orchestra's work in this field is centred around empowering secondary school-age musicians and giving them autonomy over their own musical experiences, with a particular focus on conducting opportunities for students from a range of backgrounds. Activities will include side-by-side opportunities, conducting workshops and coaching, family concerts, and creative composition sessions.

Since its debut in October 2024, Chromatica has been led by its Founding Artistic Director Peter Manning and by the early-career conductors of its Emerging Conductor programme. The appointment of a Principal Conductor gives that work a single sustained artistic voice.

For more information and tickets, visit chromaticaorchestra.com

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Notes to Editors

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About Oliver Cope

Oliver Cope (b. 1999) is a British conductor and Principal Conductor of Chromatica Orchestra. A prize-winner at the 2026 Gustav Mahler Conducting Competition, he returns to Bamberg during the 2026/27 season for a

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BR-KLASSIK studio production with the Bamberger Symphoniker. He is also a recent First Prize winner of both the Koussevitzky International Conducting Competition and the International Athens Conducting Competition.

He graduated with First Class Honours and Honorary Scholarship from Clare College, Cambridge, later studying conducting at the Royal Academy of Music with Sian Edwards and at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with Martyn Brabbins, where he received the Hugh S. Robertson Prize for Orchestral Conducting.

He has conducted orchestras across the UK and Europe including the Hallé, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Bamberger Symphoniker, Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, Sønderjyllands Symfoniorkester and Thessaloniki State Symphony Orchestra.

Further competition successes include reaching the finals of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's Calleva Conductors' Competition and the Mitropoulos Competition, where he received Third Prize with no First Prize awarded, and the semifinals of the Liria Conducting Competition. During the coming season he will also take part in the Solti International Conducting Competition and the Hong Kong International Conducting Competition.

In opera, Cope has conducted Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin and Britten's The Rape of Lucretia with Hampstead Garden Opera, with his work praised by The Spectator as "the sort of night that made you want to drag in an opera sceptic...just to watch their prejudices being blasted away at storm force". In 2026 he leads a production of Stravinsky's The Rake's Progress for British Youth Opera at Battersea Arts Centre.

A prize-winning harpist and pianist, he trained with Ieuan Jones, Danielle Perrett and Claudia Schurr.

About Chromatica Orchestra

"The spirit of the performance and the clear enjoyment of the Chromatica players held it all together... They had a ball, and that communicated to the audience" - Bachtrack

Chromatica Orchestra is dedicated to nurturing the next generation of musical talent, bringing together outstanding emerging orchestral players with brilliant soloists. Oliver Cope was appointed the orchestra's first Principal Conductor in 2026, taking up the role at the opening of its third season.

Since its debut concert at Battersea Arts Centre in London in October 2024, Chromatica has performed with soloists including violinists Francesca Dego, Charlotte Saluste-Bridoux and Kristine Balanas, clarinettist Julian Bliss, horn player Ben Goldscheider, tenor Robin Tritschler, mezzo-soprano Lotte Betts-Dean, pianist Ryan Wang, and conductors Tess Jackson and Charlotte Politi.

Players who have worked with Chromatica Orchestra have gone on to win positions with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, the BBC Concert Orchestra and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

Our support for young musicians runs through established partnerships with the Music in Secondary Schools Trust (MiSST) and Bobby Moore Academy, and new collaborations with several South London music hubs. The orchestra's work in this field is centred around empowering secondary school-age musicians and giving them autonomy over their own musical experiences, with a particular focus on conducting opportunities for students from a range of backgrounds. Activities will include side-by-side opportunities, conducting workshops and coaching, family concerts, and creative composition sessions.

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