



**FORWARD PLANNER:** Monday 20 April 2026, 1.30pm BST

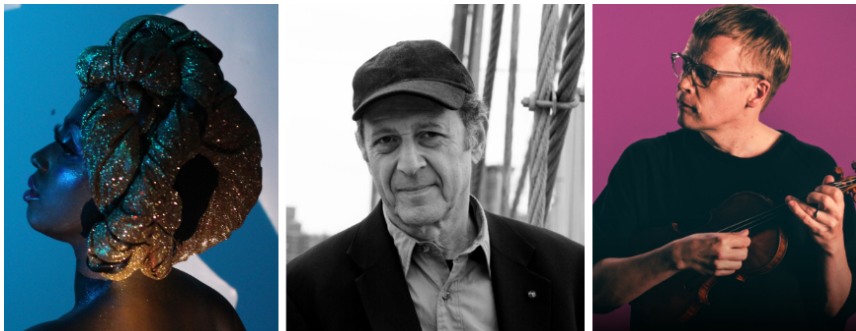
**Listings diary:** [here](#)

**Images:** [here](#)

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## The Southbank Centre's Classical Music Autumn/Winter 2026/27 programme bookended by milestone 90th birthday celebrations for icons of minimalism Steve Reich and Philip Glass

- The two landmark celebrations frame a programme of world-class orchestral performance, boundary-pushing new work and fresh approaches to the concert hall experience
- The season kicks off with new work by **Julia Wolfe** featuring 146 voices, conducted by **Marin Alsop**.
- The programme sees **Pekka Kuusisto** and **Jean Rondeau** join **Manchester Collective** as the Southbank Centre's cohort of Resident Artists for 2026/27



The **Southbank Centre's Classical Music Autumn/Winter 2026/27** programme will open and reach its finale with landmark moments celebrating two of the most influential composers of the 20th and 21st centuries, bringing together Resident Orchestras, Resident Artists and new collaborators to experience the breadth of their genre-defying output. A two-day exploration of the music of **Steve Reich** (26–27 Sep) marks his 90th birthday with performances ranging from intimate chamber works to a large-scale immersive sonic installation, while the season culminates in a major celebration of **Philip Glass** (30–31 Jan), which includes the UK premiere of his 15th Symphony, *Lincoln*.

Across the season, the Southbank Centre continues to present classical music as an evolving, contemporary art form – moving fluidly between tradition and experimentation, canonical repertoire and new commissions, and expanding the ways in which classical music can be experienced in a plethora of formats.

**Toks Dada, the Southbank Centre's Head of Classical Music, said:** *"Classical music's appeal continues to stand the test of time with a 500-year history that brings the most enriching, life-changing musical experiences to audiences in the present, affirming its place as a contemporary and evolving artform. This Autumn's classical music programme reflects the breadth and possibilities of classical music*

today – from landmark works that have shaped the art form to new voices and collaborations that continue to expand it. Our Resident Orchestras and Resident Artists sit at the heart of this programme, bringing extraordinary music to life, working with us to ignite and realise new ways to connect audiences with classical music's full power, scale and intimacy. As the UK's biggest presenter of classical music, we're proud to continue bringing both new and established audiences experiences that are unapologetically bold, eclectic and welcoming."

### **New Artist Residencies**

This Autumn/Winter, the Southbank Centre welcomes two new Resident Artists for 2026/27 – violinist and conductor **Pekka Kuusisto**, and harpsichordist **Jean Rondeau** – who join returning Resident Artists **Manchester Collective**. Each brings a distinctive artistic voice, collaborative spirit and the development of new work and ideas to the programme. Kuusisto opens his residency with **Aurora Orchestra** in a nature-inspired programme, including Kuusisto's folk-influenced reimagining of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* (25 Sep) featuring folk musician **Ale Carr**, before returning with composer and singer-songwriter **Gabriel Kahane** as **Council** (7 Nov). Rondeau begins with Bach's *Goldberg Variations* on the organ (27 Sep), later appearing in a chamber music collaboration with **Thomas Dunford** and **Nicolas Altstaedt** (25 Oct). **Manchester Collective** return for their fifth year as Resident Artists, presenting collaborations that span continents and genres – from a performance with percussionist **Sidiki Dembélé** (4 Oct) to the genre-blurring **Black Gold** (6 Dec), and an appearance as part of two-day **Philip Glass at 90** celebrations (31 Jan).

### **Season Opening Week (22-27 Sep) including Steve Reich at 90 (26-27 Sep)**

The season opens with a powerful week of large-scale work and defining artistic voices, led by the **Southbank Centre's Resident Orchestras and Artists**, and kicking the season off with choral and orchestral performances of scale. **Julia Wolfe's** *Fire in My Mouth* (22 Sep), conducted by the Philharmonia Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor **Marin Alsop** with the **Philharmonia Orchestra** and a chorus of 146 voices, provides a poignant opening moment. The work commemorates the 146 victims of the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire through an oratorio of massed voices, folk song and visual elements. The Philharmonia Orchestra's Principal Conductor **Santtu-Matias Rouvali** then leads the orchestra for a performance of Brahms, Elgar and Dvořák with soloist **Sol Gabetta** (24 Sep). The **London Philharmonic Orchestra** continues the week with Britten's *War Requiem* (26 Sep), a monumental work combining sacred text and war poetry, conducted by Principal Conductor **Ed Gardner**. Resident Artist **Pekka Kuusisto** joins Resident Orchestra **Aurora Orchestra** (25 Sep) for a distinctive reimagining of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* featuring folk musician **Ale Carr**, while pianist **Mariam Batsashvili** (26 Sep) and Resident Artist **Jean Rondeau** (27 Sep) bring contrasting approaches to keyboard repertoire spanning Bach to Liszt.

The week culminates in a two-day celebration of **Steve Reich's** 90th birthday (26-27 Sep), featuring the **Carducci, Ligeti and Solem Quartets** joining forces to perform *Triple Quartet*, the UK premiere of a new arrangement of *Different Trains*, and *WTC 9/11* marking the 25th anniversary of September 11. The concert is followed by a Reich-inspired classical club night. **Paraorchestra** perform *Music for 18 Musicians* as a live sonic installation for a moving audience, while Resident Orchestra **London Sinfonietta** joins forces with **Jonny Greenwood** for a programme featuring *Electric Counterpoint* and *Pulse* alongside *City Life*, bringing together one of minimalism's defining compositional voices with contemporary collaborators.

### **Resident Orchestras – world-class performance at scale**

At the heart of the season are the Southbank Centre's six Resident Orchestras – **Aurora Orchestra**, **Chineke! Orchestra**, **London Philharmonic Orchestra**, **London Sinfonietta**, **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment** and **Philharmonia Orchestra** – whose programmes span large-scale symphonic works, contemporary commissions and distinctive concert formats, powered by exemplary, world-class orchestral talent.

Highlights include the **Philharmonia Orchestra's** performance of Bruckner's colossal *5th Symphony*, led by **Herbert Blomstedt**, and the **London Philharmonic Orchestra** performing Britten's *War Requiem* (26 Sep) in a season that includes Stravinsky's *The Firebird* and the world premiere of Mark Simpson's *Piano Concerto*. **Aurora Orchestra** collaborates with Resident Artist **Pekka Kuusisto** in a reimagining of *The Four Seasons* (25 Sep), while **Chineke! Orchestra** presents The Ayoub Sisters' *Arabic Symphony* (11 Oct) alongside core repertoire and new work. The **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment** brings staged drama to Bizet's *L'Arlésienne* (9–10 Oct) and festive performances of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*. The **London Sinfonietta** plays a central role in the **Steve Reich at 90** celebrations, including a collaboration with Jonny Greenwood (27 Sep), while across the season all six orchestras contribute to a programme that reflects the scale, diversity and vitality of orchestral music today. Further information about the Resident Orchestras can be found [here](#).

### **Philip Glass at 90 (30-31 Jan)**

The Southbank Centre closes the Autumn/Winter programme with a celebration of another great voice of American minimalism and influential architect of the modern soundworld: Philip Glass. Over two days, audiences will have a rare opportunity to hear the epic *Music in 12 Parts*, performed by **Riot Ensemble**, and Glass' string quartets performed by the composer's close collaborators **Brooklyn Rider** and Southbank Centre Resident Artists **Manchester Collective**. The two-day focus culminates in the UK premiere of Glass' 15th Symphony, *Lincoln*, with a libretto drawing on the speeches and writings of Abraham Lincoln, sung by baritone **Davóné Tines**.

**Mark Ball, the Southbank Centre's Artistic Director, said:** *"As we continue our 75th anniversary year, this season reflects our ongoing ambition to bring audiences closer to the transformative power of classical music. Working closely with our Resident Orchestras and Artists, we present a programme of concerts that honours the depth of the repertoire while exploring new ways of experiencing it. Seventy-five years on from our opening concert, it's our privilege to welcome audiences to the place where the heritage of classical music inspires the innovators of today. From large-scale orchestral works to exploratory mixed reality formats outside the concert hall, this is a season that speaks to the richness and range of the art form."*

### **Playing with Fire: Yuja Wang – an odyssey through a new kind of concert experience**

A major highlight of the Southbank Centre's 75th anniversary year is *Playing with Fire: Yuja Wang* (11 Sep – 3 Jan), a multisensory mixed-reality installation that reimagines the piano recital as an expansive visual and sonic world. At its centre is a self-playing Steinway Spirio piano, recreating Yuja Wang's own performance in precise detail, while audiences are surrounded by an immersive virtual reality audio and visually animated environment. The mixed reality experience extends the virtuosity and emotional range of the music into a fully realised visual landscape, offering audiences a new way to encounter classical performance and canonical repertoire.

This work is produced by VIVE Arts and Atlas V, in collaboration with production partner Lightroom, and supported by Steinway & Sons and the Centre National du Cinéma et de l'image animée.

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### **Keyboard Music – welcoming the greatest in piano and organ performance**

*Keyboard Music* brings together a roster of internationally acclaimed pianists and organists, exploring repertoire that spans centuries, while offering fresh perspectives on familiar works. Highlights include **Mariam Batsashvili's** programme of Bach and Liszt (26 Sep), Resident Artist **Jean Rondeau's** *Goldberg Variations* (27 Sep), and **Vadym Kholodenko's** performance of Schumann and Berlioz (17 Oct). Later in the season, **Hayato Sumino** presents *Chopin Orbit* (29 Nov), following his recently released album of the same name, followed by **Nobuyuki Tsujii's** programme of Beethoven, Grieg and Tchaikovsky (6 Dec). The series continues into the new year with **Isabelle Demers'** organ recital culminating in Brahms (23 Jan), before concluding with **Pavel Kolesnikov** performing Feldman's *Triadic Memories* (29 Jan). Across

the series, each recital transforms familiar works into vivid, unforgettable experiences, showcasing the piano and organ at their most expressive and daring.

### **Alternative Experiences – shifting perceptions of the classical experience**

Bold, unexpected, and boundary-pushing, *Alternative Experiences* challenge expectations of what a classical concert can be. Central to this is **Paraorchestra's** presentation of *Music for 18 Musicians* (27 Sep), transforming the Clore Ballroom into a living sonic installation where audiences can move among the performers. **Riot Ensemble** performs Glass' epic four-hour *Music in 12 Parts* (30 Jan) turning the Clore Ballroom into a minimalist soundbath. Alongside these flagship events, *After Dark* events continue the concert hall experience late into the evening, offering more informal, exploratory encounters with music in the Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer: a **Reich**-inspired club night (26 Sep); **Zubin Kanga** performs music by **Alex Groves** in a club night setting fusing Baroque forms and electronic music (17 Oct); players from **Chineke! Orchestra** join guitarist **Plínio Fernandes** and violinist **Braimah Kanneh-Mason** for an intimate evening of Latin American music and folk songs (27 Nov); and players from the **London Philharmonic Orchestra** join clarinettist **Martin Fröst** and vocalist **Matilda Fröst** (20 Jan).

### **Contemporary Edit – showcasing boundary-pushing new music and innovation**

*Contemporary Edit* places today's most visionary artists alongside the defining composers of the 20th century, framing the season with landmark celebrations of **Steve Reich at 90** (26–27 Sep) and **Philip Glass at 90** (30–31 Jan). Opening with **Julia Wolfe's** *Fire in My Mouth* (22 Sep), the series spans bold new commissions and genre-defying collaborations. Resident Artists **Manchester Collective** return with performances alongside percussionist **Sidiki Dembélé** (4 Oct) and the ground-shaking **Black Gold** (6 Dec) featuring **Luke Mombrea's** work of the same name with visuals from **Nate Mohler**, and the London premiere of a new work by **Sasha Scott**. Elsewhere, **Zubin Kanga** returns with *Ghost in the Machine* (17 Oct) exploring the intersection of music and technology. Resident Artist **Pekka Kuusisto** appears with singer-songwriter and long-time collaborator **Gabriel Kahane** as **Council** (7 Nov), and the **London Sinfonietta** presents the world premiere of **Brigitta Muntendorf's** *Last Show* (28 Nov), an immersive work that turns the concert hall into a live social experiment including audience participation. The series concludes with **Pavel Kolesnikov's** performance of Feldman's *Triadic Memories* (29 Jan), bringing *Contemporary Edit* full circle from minimalist pioneers to today's most exploratory voices.

### **Chamber Music – intimate tableaux of traditional repertoire**

*Chamber Music* at the Southbank Centre brings audiences close to the alchemy of small ensembles, where duos, quartets, and quintets spark off one another in intimate, emotionally rich performances. As part of the **Steve Reich at 90** celebrations, the **Carducci, Ligeti and Solem Quartets** join forces (26 Sep), showcasing the intricate, shifting textures of his chamber writing. Resident Artist **Jean Rondeau** joins **Thomas Dunford** and **Nicolas Altstaedt** for a programme of French Baroque music (25 Oct), while trumpeter **Tine Thing Helseth** leads a quintet in *The Boulangerie* (7 Nov), celebrating the legacy of influential teacher and composer **Nadia Boulanger**. Later in the season, **Concerto Italiano** returns to perform Monteverdi's complete Third Book of *Madrigals* (4 Dec), bringing early Baroque vocal music to life in an intimate setting. Spanning centuries from early Baroque to contemporary minimalism, these performances highlight the expressive immediacy and collaborative spirit at the core of chamber music.

### **Family experiences – classical music for all ages**

The Autumn/Winter programme also includes events designed for younger audiences and families, offering accessible entry points into classical music. **The Multi-Story Orchestra's** *Dreamer* (23 Sep) invites audiences of all ages to engage directly with musicians in an interactive experience that culminates in a live performance. And elsewhere in the season, **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment** presents *OAE TOTS* – a fun, interactive performance for under-5s (17 & 23 Jan), while the **London Philharmonic Orchestra's** *FUNharmonics* offers an introduction to Elgar's *Enigma Variations* for all the family (23 Jan). Across the season, family-friendly programming and inclusive formats – from immersive installations to

relaxed performances – ensure that classical music remains open, welcoming and engaging for audiences of all backgrounds and ages.

**The Classical Music Autumn/Winter 2026/27 programme goes on sale to Southbank Centre Members on Wednesday 22 April 2026 and on general sale on Tuesday 28 April 2026. <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/classicalmusic>**

### **CLICK LINKS BELOW TO VIEW MONTHLY CONCERT LISTINGS:**

#### **SEPTEMBER 2026**

September brings the beginning of the Autumn/Winter Classical Music programme with an opening week featuring a celebration of a legendary minimalist composer, **Steve Reich at 90**, including an immersive performance of his work *Music for 18 Musicians* from **Paraorchestra** and a double bill featuring a triple quartet performance and an after dark clubnight. Elsewhere, **Julia Wolfe's** *Fire In My Mouth* receives its London premiere, performed by the **Philharmonia Orchestra** under **Marin Alsop**.

#### **OCTOBER 2026**

October sees Icelandic virtuoso **Víkingur Ólafsson** join **Edward Gardner** and the **London Philharmonic Orchestra** for a rapturous recital of Stravinsky's *The Firebird*, alongside the world premiere of **Mark Simpson's** Piano Concerto. Herbert Blomstedt conducts the **Philharmonia Orchestra's** performance of Bruckner's colossal *5th Symphony*, while Resident Artists **Manchester Collective** are joined by extraordinary percussionist **Sidiki Dembélé** and his ensemble to provide the London premiere of new work from **Nwando Ebizie**. Long-time collaborators, Harpsichordist **Jean Rondeau**, cellist **Nicolas Altstaedt** and lutenist **Thomas Dunford** unite to explore the brilliance of the French baroque, and **Vadym Kholodenko** tackles Liszt's audacious solo-piano version of Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique* in a solo recital.

#### **NOVEMBER 2026**

November sees **Pekka Kuusisto** and **Gabriel Kahane** formalise their decade-long musical friendship as **Council** in an intimate evening concert, **Alice Sara Ott** joins the **London Philharmonic Orchestra** for Mahler's First Symphony, and **Chineke! Orchestra** journey from vibrant chamber suites to Adolphus Hailstork's uplifting First Symphony with soloist **Plínio Fernandes**. The **Philharmonia Orchestra** presents Shostakovich's *Piano Concerto No.2* with **Nobuyuki Tsujii** conducted by **Xian Zhang**, followed by actor and playwright **Taylor Mac's** UK orchestral premiere of the award-winning *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music*. The month concludes with **Hayato Sumino** exploring the masterpieces of Chopin, alongside new sounds he has inspired.

#### **DECEMBER 2026**

December's programme includes a rare UK visit from **Concerto Italiano** as they perform the complete third book of Monteverdi's *Madrigals*, resident artists **Manchester Collective** return with *Black Gold*, and a solo concert from acclaimed pianist **Nobuyuki Tsujii** exploring Beethoven, Grieg & Tchaikovsky. The **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment** capture the festive spirit with parts 1 – 6 of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* performed over two days.

#### **JANUARY 2027**

The season culminates with a celebration of minimalist icon **Philip Glass**, including a rare performance of *Music in 12 Parts* by the **Riot Ensemble**. **Isabelle Demers** uncovers the nuance of the organ in a concert featuring works by Bach, Stravinsky and Brahms, and **LPO Funharmonics** returns with *The Big Enigma*, the **London Philharmonic Orchestra** and presenter **Rachel Leach** discover the codes and mysteries hidden in some of the world's greatest orchestral music in a special concert for kids and their grownups.

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For further information, please contact: [press@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:press@southbankcentre.co.uk)

## **About the Southbank Centre**

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest multi-arts centre and engages the most diverse audiences of any performing arts organisation in the UK. Our biggest venue, the Royal Festival Hall (2,700 seats) is the lasting legacy of the 1951 Festival of Britain and the ambition and values of that project – that arts, ideas, innovation and culture can heal communities and should be available and accessible to everyone – are still our guiding principles today. The Southbank Centre is uniquely able to offer a wide-ranging, inclusive and world-class artistic programme spanning contemporary visual arts, music, dance, performance, literature, comedy and spoken word across the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, the Hayward Gallery and our free spaces. We are also home to the National Poetry Library, the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP), two resident organisations (Kinetika Bloco and Tomorrow's Warriors) and six resident orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Philharmonia Orchestra). [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)

## **About the Southbank Centre's Resident Orchestras**

### **Aurora Orchestra**

Innovative and boundary breaking, Aurora Orchestra is best known for its Orchestral Theatre productions and signature memorised performance style. Its creative learning strand reaches thousands of young people each year, from immersive performances to school classrooms to its free digital platform Aurora Classroom. Aurora performs alongside Southbank Centre Resident Artist Pekka Kuusisto and cittern player Ale Carr with a nature-inspired programme featuring a folk influenced reimagining of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and Sibelius' *Fifth Symphony*.

### **Chineke! Orchestra**

Founded in 2015 by Chi-chi Nwanoku CBE, Chineke! Orchestra is Europe's first majority Black and ethnically diverse orchestra. Performing classical works alongside music by Black and ethnically diverse composers, the ensemble made its debut at the Southbank Centre in 2015 and became a Resident Orchestra in 2022.

### **London Philharmonic Orchestra**

The London Philharmonic Orchestra has been creating thrilling orchestral experiences at the Southbank Centre since the Royal Festival Hall's opening concert 75 years ago. You'll also find us at our resident venues in Brighton, Eastbourne and Saffron Walden, and on tour throughout the UK and internationally, performing to sell-out audiences worldwide. Each summer we're resident at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, combining the magic of opera with Glyndebourne's glorious setting in the Sussex countryside.

### **London Sinfonietta**

The London Sinfonietta is one of the world's leading contemporary music ensembles. Formed in 1968, it has commissioned over 470 works. Its musicians reimagine the contemporary repertoire they champion, and work with inspiring living composers and artists to create new music. They collaborate with young people, communities and the public in making projects involving film, theatre, dance and art, and their free-to-view digital channel reaches audiences around the world.

### **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment**

In 1986, a group of inquisitive musicians took a hard look at the orchestra and decided to start from scratch, throwing out the rule book. A single conductor? No way. Specialise in one era? Too restricting. Since then, the OAE has mesmerised and augmented the music world. Period-specific instruments have become just one element of its quest for authenticity, and its name stands for excellence, diversity and exploration.

### **Philharmonia Orchestra**

The Philharmonia Orchestra continues to bring orchestral music of the very highest quality to the widest possible audience. Principal Conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali leads a series of spring concerts in which Dvořák, Elgar, Bruckner and Brahms sit alongside UK premieres by Taylor Mac and Julia Wolfe. The programme also includes globally regarded artists, international soloists and conductors including this season's Featured Artists Sol Gabetta and Nobuyuki Tsujii, plus the welcome return of Herbert Blomstedt, Seong-Jin Cho and Nicola Benedetti.