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SOUTHBANK CENTRE

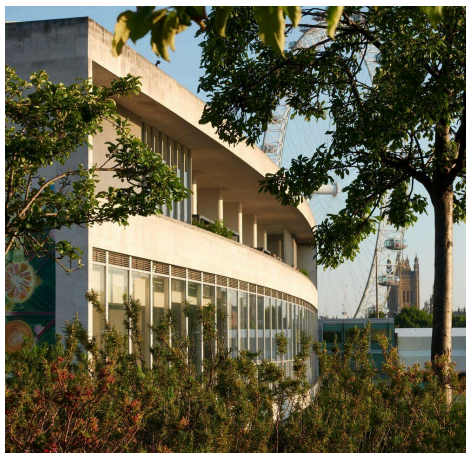
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Press images: available to download [HERE](#)

The Southbank Centre secures £10m investment to help safeguard the future of the Royal Festival Hall



TOP - Royal Festival Hall exterior. Credit: Pete Woodhead

BOTTOM, L-R: Royal Festival Hall exterior. Credit: © Edmund Sumner.
Royal Festival Hall auditorium. Credit: © Edmund Sumner.

The Southbank Centre has today been awarded £10m from Arts Council England and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to undertake critical infrastructure repairs to the Grade I listed Royal Festival Hall.

Awarded through the Creative Foundations Fund, the grant will address urgent structural challenges, ensuring this world-class venue and the UK's home for classical music remains fully operational, as well as helping to reduce its carbon footprint.

The critical work the grant will support includes replacing the building's original single-glazed windows and its aging flat roof to stop water damage from flooding and improve energy efficiency. The funding will also modernise the auditorium's rigging systems.

Elaine Bedell OBE, CEO of the Southbank Centre, said: 'We're incredibly grateful to have been awarded £10m by Arts Council England and Government to protect the future of the Royal Festival Hall. For 75 years, the Royal Festival Hall has made a unique contribution to the UK's cultural ecology; it is a world-class stage for global superstars as well as amazing home grown talent, the UK's home for classical music, and a place where people of all ages come to create lasting memories. We are proud custodians of this unique cultural asset and this award will allow us to address urgent repairs – including fixing leaking roofs, failing window glazing and ageing rigging systems. In doing so, ensuring we can focus our attention and income on artistic innovation, talent development and serving the millions of visitors who bring this iconic site to life.'

The Creative Foundations Fund award follows the Southbank Centre's recent publication of its Impact Report 2025, which highlighted that it welcomed 11.6m visitors to its 11-acre site in 2025 and that 55% of its programming was free. It also demonstrates the Southbank Centre's success opening up classical music and orchestral experiences to more people – with 40% of its classical music tickets sold to people booking with the Southbank Centre for the first time.

Culture Secretary, Lisa Nandy said: 'I want everyone, everywhere to feel a sense of pride about where they come from. Cultural organisations across London are important custodians of local identity and play a key role in the story we tell ourselves as a nation.'

'Our Arts Everywhere Fund is delivering on our commitment to support cultural assets across the country, increasing access and preserving them for future generations. This is demonstrated by grants announced today that will benefit twenty-four culture venues, museums, and library services across London.

'Arts and culture are the beating hearts of our communities; they have the power to unite us in the face of division and break down barriers to opportunity. We want to harness the power to help us build a brighter future for the people of London.'

Michelle Walker, London Area Director, Arts Council England, said: 'This significant investment is a vital step in safeguarding the future of cultural venues, museums and libraries at a time when many are facing real challenges. Across London these spaces are the backbone of our city, where communities come together.

'By supporting these essential improvements this funding will help ensure that these venues remain open, sustainable and accessible for years to come, protecting the creative spaces that London's artists and audiences rely on.'

This vital investment comes as the Southbank Centre celebrates 75 years since the first chapter in its story, the 1951 Festival of Britain. Channelling the founding spirit of the 1951 Festival of Britain, a moment of national renewal and optimistic energy, the landmark year features a massive takeover event titled *You Are Here* which is co-created, directed and designed by Danny Boyle, Carson McColl, Gareth Pugh and Paulette Randall, with Sabrina Mahfouz and Natasha Chivers; the 31st edition of the *Meltdown* festival, curated by the globally influential Harry Styles; the return of the multi-arts festival centred on reimagining the orchestral experience, *Multitudes*; and Anish Kapoor returning to the Hayward Gallery after 28 years with a landmark exhibition. It also includes a national programme of art, literature and music – aiming to reach 1 million people in over 40 towns and cities across all four nations of the UK.

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Notes to editors:

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The funding will enable the Southbank Centre to:

- Replace nearly 2,700m² of original single-glazed windows with high-performance double glazing to improve energy efficiency and structural integrity.
- Complete a full replacement of the flat roof to stop persistent water ingress that threatens the building's historic interiors and daily programming.
- Overhaul the 20-year-old auditorium rigging software and consoles, which are now obsolete and at risk of failure.
- Upgrade drainage and waterproofing on the Festival Terrace to prevent flooding
- Significantly reduce the building's carbon footprint and utility costs, helping the Southbank Centre move toward its net-zero targets.
- Ensure the Royal Festival Hall remains one of the UK's most important venues with a diverse and accessible artist programme attracting world class talent and hosting cultural events of global significance. These include the BAFTA Film Awards and London Film Festival.

The Southbank Centre's Impact Report 2025 is available to download [HERE](#)

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) 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

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. Between 2023 and 2026 we will have invested over £467 million of public money from Government, alongside an estimated £250 million each year from The National Lottery, to support individual practitioners, arts organisations, museums and libraries, and to help ensure that people in every part of the country have access to culture and creativity in the places where they live. Visit [our website](#) to learn more about our work.