



SOUTHBANK CENTRE

MULTITUDES

UNNATURAL HARMONY: SOUNDS OF LEE ALEXANDER McQUEEN

Wednesday 29 & Thursday 30 April 2026, 7.30pm | Royal Festival Hall

Welcome to *Multitudes*, our multi-arts festival powered by orchestral music. We're bringing together some of the world's finest classical music ensembles – including our six Resident Orchestras – for collaborations with an incredible range of artists from different art forms. Together, we're creating a new way for you to encounter the enduring power of classical music, with unique, adventurous, boundary-breaking concerts.

It's a musical experience like no other!

Mark Ball, Artistic Director, Southbank Centre

Commissioned by the Southbank Centre. Produced in collaboration with
NEWFORM Music and the London Contemporary Orchestra.

MUSIC

Barber Adagio for strings

Björk Frosti

Lady Gaga Bad Romance

Philip Glass Morning Passages from The Hours

John Gosling, Raymond Watts & Mike Watts Parts 1–4
from Plato's Atlantis

Handel Sarabande from Suite in D minor for keyboard,
HWV.437

Armand van Helden Dark Ages Mix from The Witch Doktor

Mick Jagger & Keith Richards Paint It, Black

Mozart Adagio from Piano Concerto No.23 in A, K.488

Nirvana Smells Like Teen Spirit

Michael Nyman The heart asks pleasure first from
The Piano

Penderecki Threnody to the victims of Hiroshima

Purcell When I am laid in earth (Dido's Lament) from
Dido and Aeneas

A Smith Duelling Banjos

Strauss Introduction (Sunrise) from Also sprach Zarathustra

John Williams Main theme from Schindler's List

John Williams Wild signals from Close Encounters
of the Third Kind

Run time (approx.): 1 hour and 30 minutes, with no interval

CREATIVE TEAM

London Contemporary Orchestra

Robert Ames *conductor*

Le Gateau Chocolat *vocals*

Galya Bisengalieva *solo violin*

Sari Mizoe & Willow Kerensa Fenner *dancers*

Robert Ames *creative director*

John Gosling *creative director*

Elayce Ismail *stage director*

Holly Blakey *live choreography*

Sharia Johnson *dance rehearsal director*

Matt Daw *lighting design*

Simon Hendry *sound design*

Matthew Josephs *stage costumes and stylist*

Michael Clark *filmed choreography*

Jules Cunningham, Simon Williams &

Charlie Williams *film dancers*

Eddie Whelan *film director*

Douglas Hart *film director*

Katy England *film costumes and styling*

This production is a tribute to the life and creative vision of Lee Alexander McQueen and the role that music played in his life. This production has not been made with the involvement, endorsement or sponsorship of the House of McQueen. No costumes, clothing, fabrics or designs featured in this production are the goods or products of the House of McQueen nor are they endorsed by them.



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ENGLAND**

UNNATURAL HARMONY

'I'm intent on chopping things up. Not chopping them up to destroy them, chopping them up to distort them.'

Lee Alexander McQueen

'Me too.'

John Gosling

The fertility of the dark places Lee Alexander McQueen inhabited, and that we all inhabit, is where we begin.

Lee Alexander McQueen listened to *Dido and Aeneas* as he worked. Henry Purcell's 1689 opera is best known for its final aria, 'When I Am Laid in Earth.' Against a repeated descending bassline, Dido sings an expressive lament as she prepares to take her own life: 'Remember me, but – ah! – forget my fate.' Its unsettling beauty, performed tonight by Le Gateau Chocolat, lies in the juxtaposition of a grounded lamento bassline and the haunting freedom of the vocal line.

At times, these forces find fleeting harmony.

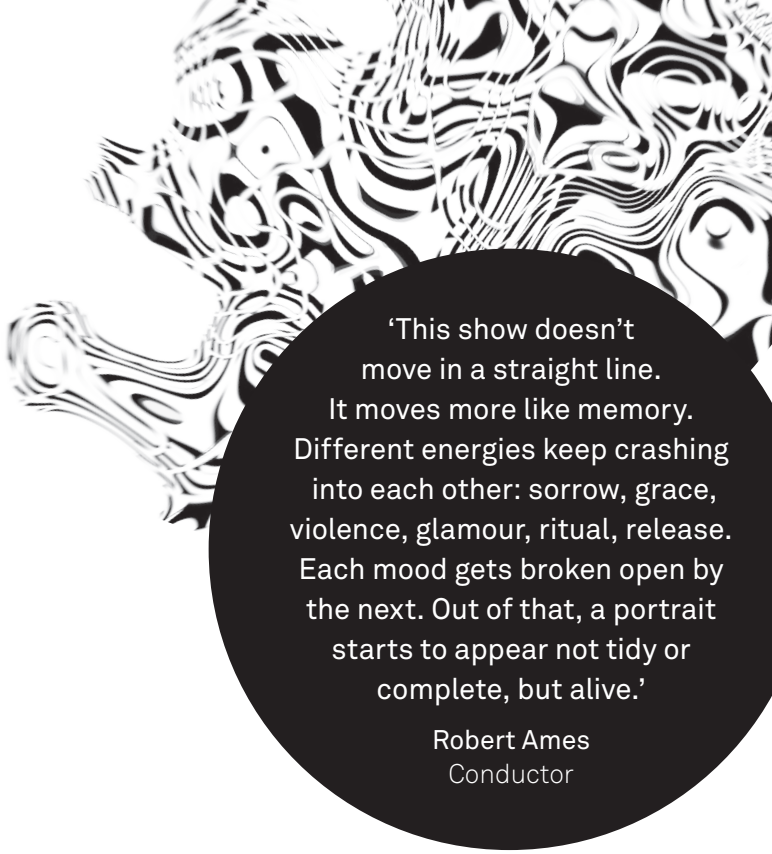
Stark contrasts – detachment and intensity, violence and beauty – run throughout the designer's life and work.

We hear these contrasts through interruptions, repetitions and sudden changes of scale in this concert; the artful apathy of Nirvana's 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' giving way to the collective grief at the centre of John Williams' theme for *Schindler's List* performed tonight by Galya Bisengalieva.

Arthur Smith's *Duelling Banjos* paired with a Baroque selection from Handel is likewise disparate, but connected. Out of the intensity of Smith's banjo players Michael Clark incarnates a young Lee – on film. The embodiment of spirit, rawness and vitality. This creative, celebratory place flickers with violence and energy before giving way once more....

'There is beauty, yes, and then there is the other thing – grief. You can't deny the tragedy of what happened to Lee. We know this other thing. It is a companion to us all. My father died a couple of weeks ago when we were in pre-production. Actually, for some of our early meetings I was at my dad's house. When I came back to the studio – it felt insurmountable. Grief had to have some kind of acknowledgement in this. Willow and Sari's duet during Penderecki and Mozart ... is ... a grief duet. That is what it is.'

Holly Blakey



'This show doesn't move in a straight line. It moves more like memory. Different energies keep crashing into each other: sorrow, grace, violence, glamour, ritual, release. Each mood gets broken open by the next. Out of that, a portrait starts to appear not tidy or complete, but alive.'

Robert Ames
Conductor

The sirens in Armand Van Helden's *The Witch Doktor* (1994) heralded the future, a carrying on. Van Helden's loops are subtle, each repetition adding to the feeling of pure momentum and anticipation. Björk's lustrous *Frösti* feels like coming up for air, before we enter the heart of *Plato's Atlantis*, composed by Gosling, Watts & Watts. A tribal drumbeat takes over, and we can hear distant chants. A steady heartbeat accelerates into a central rhythm and leads us into what comes next. We're held in the loop of this moment, the beauty of the unnatural harmonies pulsating with each repetition.

Lee Alexander McQueen said, on making *Plato's Atlantis*: 'We're descending to where we came from. Th(is is) about the future, it's about the planet ending and it's about survival of the fittest. What's left?'

Programme note © Olivia Giovetti & Nathalie Blue, 2026

LONDON CONTEMPORARY ORCHESTRA

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VIOLIN I

Alexandra Caldon
Anna De Bruin
Willemijn Steenbakkers
Anais Boyadjieva
Akiko Ishikawa
Aleksandra Mansurova
Anastasia Ivaschenko
Phoebe Snelling

VIOLIN II

Venetia Jollands
Claudia Dehnke
Kotono Sato
Claire Khoda
Farhad Moayedi
Romana Szczepaniak

VIOLA

Matthew Kettle
Jordan Bergmans
Alison De Souza
Raisa Zaprynova
Amy May

CELLO

Brian O'Kane
Reinoud Ford
Deni Teo
James Douglas
Meera Raja

DOUBLE BASS

Dave Brown
Gwen Reed
Yijia Cui

FLUTE

Pasha Mansurov
Ruth Harrison

OBOE

David Hedley
Lorraine Hart

CLARINET

Anna Hashimoto
Matthew Wilsher

BASSOON

Eanna Monaghan
Ashley Myall

HORN

Francesca
Moore-Bridger
Ruth O'Reilly
Remi Faggiani
Nicholas Ireson

TRUMPET

Rebecca Crawshaw
Sarah Campbell

TROMBONE

Chris Augustine
Billy Yates

BASS TROMBONE

Sam Freeman

HARP

Vicky Lester

PERCUSSION

Sam Wilson
Hugh Wilkinson
Angela Wai Nok Hui

PIANO

Satoshi Kubo

KEYBOARD

Gus Tredwell

ORGAN

Samuel Ali

CONDUCTOR

Robert Ames

ARRANGERS

Tom Arnold
Christian Balvig
Liam Fuller
Cee Haines
Chester Tribley
Bronte Tucker

Production

London Contemporary Orchestra *producer*
Nathalie Blue *executive producer*
Saloni Thakkar *executive producer (LCO)*
Shannon St Luce, Olivia George &
Shaun Bajnoczky *orchestra management*
Emma Stoker & Ariana Kupczynski *business affairs*

Co-produced and commissioned by the Southbank Centre

Film credits

Eddie Whelan & Douglas Hart *film direction*
Deepika Patel, Sam Gainsbury & Anna Whitting *artistic advisors & film production support*
Deepika Patel *executive producer*
Michael Clark *film concept*
Michael Clark *film choreography*
Katy England *film costume consultant & styling*
Stevie Stewart *original costumes*
Jules Cunningham, Simon Williams, Charlie Williams *dancers*
Rob Jarvis *DoP*

Klim Jerevicius *1st AC*
Joshua Ighodaro *2nd AC*
Alexander Brunacci *DIT*
Krunal Saadani & Mark Hayley *electricians*
Jagi Nelson, Myteś Mansfield *styling assistants*
Kim Garduno *hair stylist*
Valetina Kuyplinova *hair stylist assistant*
Joe Brooks *make-up artist*
Philip Treacy *hats*
Gracey Lyster-Brown, Celeste Manders *runners*

Special thanks to Direct Digital, Philip Treacy and Stefan Bartlett, Daphne Guinness, Steven Philip, Fred Perry and Le Kilt

The Producers would like to give **very special thanks to:** Toby Donnelly, Michael Browning, Sebastian Bailey, Jasmine Sanders, Amy Markatis, Elizabeth Norris, Thais Mendes, Toby Ramskill, Georg Rulffes, Rose Cobbe, Anna Campbell, Ben Totty, Emily Lund, Amy Gold & Tabitha McGrath, Gainsbury & Whiting, Birgitta Toyoda & Em Midwood.

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- ▶ London Contemporary Orchestra
- ▶ southbankcentre.co.uk



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