

# **SOUTHBANK CENTRE**

# **MELTDOWN**

## **Press Release**

**Date:** Monday 20 June, 09:00

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**Live images:** available to download [here](#)

**Artist images:** available to download [here](#)

**Event listings:** [here](#)

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**Grace Jones wraps her Meltdown festival in spectacular 30-foot  
Keith Haring inspired dress**



### **Festival highlights included**

- Multiple sold out shows meant **Grace Jones' Meltdown** was the second highest grossing edition in the festival's 27 year history with over 20,000 tickets sold
- Grace Jones' gender balanced line-up featured nearly 70% global majority artists
- Critically acclaimed performances by **Grace Jones, Sky Ferreira, Hot Chip and Kasai Allstars**, and **Dry Cleaning**
- Thousands of visitors enjoyed the free public programme which concluded with a dazzling catwalk, en masse hula-hooping and **ShezAr** and **The Soul Sirens** reworking Grace Jones' classics into gospel masterpieces

Music legend, fashion icon and film star **Grace Jones** delivered a stunning performance to close her curated edition of the **Southbank Centre's Meltdown** festival. Held over nine incredible days of live shows and free activities with over 20,000 tickets sold across the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Rooms, this year's line-up featured nearly 70% global majority artists with over half of performers either women or non-binary artists.

Wrapping the 27th iteration of her **Meltdown** festival, Grace Jones was full of fire and force giving yet another high energy and visually arresting performance. As the curtain dropped, Grace Jones was seen towering way above the Royal Festival Hall stage, donning a 30-foot black and white dress in a nod to her 1987 collaboration with artist Keith Haring. Not to be outdone, even by her own opening night, Grace Jones swapped through an eccentric array of outfits, from a scarlet red cape to an ornately embroidered corset, as she sauntered through her hits including 'My Jamaican Guy', 'Williams Blood', 'Pull Up To the Bumper' and 'Slave To The Rhythm'.

Elsewhere during the festival, the Southbank Centre buzzed with music from South London to Senegal, Mali to Michigan. Sold out shows from **Peaches, Dry Cleaning, Two Another, Oumou Sangaré, Big Joanie, Meshell Ndegeocello, John Grant** and **cktrl with the London Contemporary Orchestra** evidenced the exciting, eclectic mix and considered curation of this year's festival by Grace Jones and the plethora of talent that continues to be influenced by her. This year's Meltdown also ranked as the second highest grossing edition of the festival after Robert Smith's festival in 2018.



*Oumou Sangaré © Burak Cingi*

In the Royal Festival Hall, captivated crowds danced throughout performances by **Hot Chip** and **Kasai Allstars** for a one-off special, the **Love Unlimited Synth Orchestra's** tribute to Barry White featuring **Bloc Party's Kele Okereke** and **Rachel Chinouriri**, as well as the sensational Senegalise artist **Babaa Maal**. **Skunk Anansie**, supported by rising stars **Nova Twins**, brought the roof down with a thunderous wall of sound while **Greentea Peng** opted for a laid back night of dub-heavy jams, including her new single 'Stuck In The Middle', with support from the animated **Lord Apex**. Meanwhile, crowds in the Queen Elizabeth Hall and the Purcell Room were privy to some incredible moments during the festival including **Sky Ferreira's** long-awaited return to London, 'Little JB' **Lee Fields** celebrating 50 years of experience as a soul stalwart and **Shingai's** infectious, uninhibited energy.



*Shingai walks as part of the AFWL catwalk © Burak Cingi*

For the final weekend of the festival, the Southbank Centre's Riverside Terrace was a hub of bustling activity. On Friday 17 June, **ShezAr** and **The Soul Sirens** led crowds in an uplifting chorus of gospel covers of Grace Jones' hits while, on Saturday 18 June, the public alongside professional models donned their very best to walk the catwalk in a collaboration with **Africa Fashion Week London** and **Creative Resilience**. Finally, on Sunday 19 June, the Riverside Terrace was packed with enthusiastic hula-hoopers in a spinning, spectacular homage to Grace Jones.

The Southbank Centre's Meltdown festival will return in summer 2023 with details of the next curator to be announced later this year. Previous curators have included **Nile Rodgers**, **Robert Smith, M.I.A.**, **David Byrne**, **Yoko Ono**, **Massive Attack**, **Jarvis Cocker**, **David Bowie** and **Patti Smith**.

Commenting on the success of Grace Jones' Meltdown, **Southbank Centre Artistic Director Mark Ball** said, 'Grace Jones' unique cultural influence truly came alive during her



*Meltdown festival. From the incredible, global line-up we were privileged to host to the sheer joy and entertainment of our public programme, the whole team has been buoyed by the enthusiasm shown by our visitors and the artists whose creativity has been influenced by Grace's unique talent and legacy. An unmatched visionary, Grace Jones' vintage Meltdown will certainly be one for the ages.'*

## # ENDS #

For further press information

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## IMAGES

Live images: available to download [here](#)

Artist images: available to download [here](#)

EVENT LISTINGS: [here](#)

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### About Grace Jones

Grace Jones is one of the most recognised figures of contemporary culture with an influence spanning genres and generations. After taking the world by storm as one of the first black supermodels, Jones signed to Island Records in 1977 and with her first few singles - and mould-breaking fashion - became a star of New York City's Studio 54-centered disco scene. The 1980s saw her move to a new-wave hybrid of reggae, funk, pop and rock, as she worked with superstar producers such as Trevor Horn and Nile Rodgers and released a string of internationally acclaimed and enduring albums including *Warm Leatherette* (1980), *Nightclubbing* (1981), and *Slave to the Rhythm* (1985). The decade also saw her big-screen takeover with leading roles in hit movies such as *Conan the Destroyer* (1984), *A View to a Kill* (1985), and *Vamp* (1986). Her bold, androgynous image defined the visual landscape of the 1970s and 1980s making her a muse to the most exciting artists and designers of the era from Issey Miyake and Thierry Mugler to Andy Warhol, Basquiat and long-time collaborator Jean-Paul Goude. Through her enduring influence on countless artists from Bjork to Lady Gaga, and with her status quo-defying attitude, her legacy is one of fierce individuality and fearless self-expression. She continues to perform globally, captivating audiences with her musicianship, extravagant outfits and wild performances.

### **Meltdown, 1993 – present**

The Southbank Centre's award-winning *Meltdown* festival has been running annually since 1993 and is the longest-running artist-curated festival in the world. Each year the Southbank Centre invites a different cultural figure to act as curator and select performers and events of their choosing. Previous curators are: Nile Rodgers, Robert Smith, M.I.A., Guy Garvey, David Byrne, James Lavelle, Yoko Ono, Anohni, Ray Davies, Richard Thomson, Ornette Coleman, Massive Attack, Jarvis Cocker, Patti Smith, Morrissey, Lee Scratch-Perry, David Bowie, Robert Wyatt, Scott Walker, Nick Cave, John Peel, Laurie Anderson, Magnus Lindberg, Elvis Costello, Louis Andriessen and George Benjamin. Previous performers include Philip Glass, Lou Reed, Ivor Cutler, Sonic Youth, Suicide, Nina Simone, Blur, Radiohead, David Gilmour, Coldplay, Mercury Rev, Television, The Dandy Warhols, The Polyphonic

Spree, The Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Nancy Sinatra, Bert Jansch, Jeff Beck, John Cale, Iggy & The Stooges, Motorhead, Massive Attack, Moby, Nine Inch Nails, The Libertines, The Cure and Femi Kuti.

*Meltdown* has a reputation for staging one-off performances and collaborations by legendary artists. Patti Smith performed *Horses* in full for her *Meltdown*; Ray Davies re-staged the TV pop show 'Ready Steady Go!'; Jeff Buckley played his final UK show at Elvis Costello's *Meltdown*; The New York Dolls reunited for Morrissey; Nick Cave, Grace Jones and Pete Doherty sang Disney songs with Jarvis Cocker; and a rare live performance from Cocteau Twins' Elizabeth Fraser was part of Anohni's *Meltdown*. Robert Smith's 2018 *Meltdown* was nominated for Music Week Awards Festival of the Year and won the AIM Independent Music Awards 'Act of Independence' Award. It has been overseen by the Southbank Centre's former Head of Contemporary Music, Bengi Ünsal, and continues to be produced by long-term *Meltdown* producer Rhodri Jones.

### **About the Southbank Centre**

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre occupying a prominent riverside location that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. We exist to present great cultural experiences that bring people together and we achieve this by providing the space for artists to create and present their best work and by creating a place where as many people as possible can come together to experience bold, unusual and eye-opening work. We want to take people out of the everyday, every day. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. The Southbank Centre is made up of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery as well as being home to the National Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. It is also home to six Resident Orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Philharmonia Orchestra).



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