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Images: downloadable [here](#)

Festival listings: [here](#)

The Southbank Centre marks twenty years of *Imagine Children's Festival* with a fun-packed line-up for February half term



L-R: *Peppa Pig: My First Concert* © Dan Tsantilis; Joseph Coelho © Chris Close; *Wellbeing Wind Down* © Katherine Leedale.

The Southbank Centre's *Imagine Children's Festival* turns twenty in 2022 but has no intention of growing up any time soon! *Imagine* returns 9 – 20 February 2022 to provide the very best in children's theatre, comedy, family parties, hands-on activities, music, literature, dance, immersive experiences, relaxed mindfulness sessions and full-on fun for children and their grownups in the February half term. With over 160 events jam-packed into twelve days and **over fifty percent of the festival completely free**, *Imagine* is the biggest festival of its kind in London.

The multi-arts line-up for 2022 includes some of the best-loved faces from children's literature and television. Kids can join the beloved **Peppa Pig**, along with Mummy Pig, Daddy Pig and George, as they discover how music comes together and enjoy some trotter-tapping orchestral music in ***Peppa Pig: My First Concert*** (11 – 13 Feb). The concert is a fun, interactive introduction to a live orchestra for ages 2 years and older in the Queen Elizabeth Hall. ***Julia Donaldson and Friends: A Pocketful of Songs*** (19 Feb) is a fun-packed musical show filled with much-loved characters, including **Zog**, **The Highway Rat**, **Superworm** and **The Gruffalo**, and celebrates the launch of the author's new illustrated book and CD. ***Escape with Jacqueline Wilson*** (20 Feb) sees the bestselling children's author share how she started her writing career, as she introduces her new books, *The Runaway Girls* and *The Primrose Railway Children*. Celebrated poet, author and former Children's Laureate **Michael Rosen** (20 Feb) reads a selection of his best-loved poems and stories, while introducing his new picture book, *Sticky McStickstick*, a story of hope and perseverance and a fond testament to Rosen's trusty NHS walking stick.

Championing every child...

Imagine's twentieth year sees a focus on celebrating all that makes every child unique. Developed in collaboration with researchers, medical practitioners, and blind and visually impaired children at **Great**

Ormond Street Hospital and Southampton General, *The Dark* (12 – 13 Feb) tells the story of a brave young boy befriending darkness, featuring vibrant new choreography and a thrilling soundscape of live music. In a performance based on the true story of a child's struggle with letters and words, ***Little Murmur*** (17 Feb) reimagines the challenges of struggling to process the world around you as a mesmerising visual treat for all the family, as audiences are immersed in a world of dance, technology and illustration. ***Butterflies*** (17 – 18 Feb) is an uplifting tale about friendship and courage in the face of anxiety. The show toured to great acclaim in 2018 and now features an updated storyline celebrating the resilience of children throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Drum & bass band Rudimental's Leon Rolle and writer Derek Owusu discuss their new book *About This Boy* and their own life stories in ***Growing Up, Making Mistakes and Becoming YOU!*** (12 Feb) – a celebration of finding the confidence to be yourself and pursue your dreams. ***PALAUVER PARTY*** (14 Feb, free) welcomes everything that makes us unique in a jubilant drag and cabaret performance for all the family; everyone is invited and free to be who they want to be at this party!

Moments of calm...

The fun-filled days wind down with daily mindfulness and yoga in the Royal Festival Hall's Clore Ballroom, run by mindfulness experts from the Tangled Feet theatre company's Mindfulness Project. Using yoga, concentration and mindfulness exercises, ***Wellbeing Wind Down*** (12 – 20 Feb, free) is an ideal way for families to de-stress while stimulating young imagination and creativity. Moments of calm continue with ***Slumber Stories*** (9 – 10 Feb, free), as story-lovers are invited to drift into a calm and mindful night-time routine with tales and music from around the world, and with ***Cosmic Kids Yoga's*** (14 Feb) guided yoga and storytelling sessions.

Ruth Hardie, Festival Programmer at the Southbank Centre, said:

"Now twenty years old, Imagine Children's Festival is, as ever, about unlocking creativity and celebrating the individuality of every child – a festival for kids and their grown ups to explore, learn, discover and play. This year we are bursting at the seams with activities and events to inspire, engage and entertain, with a focus on wellbeing and championing the things that make each child unique. I'm particularly pleased with this year's virtual, BSL-interpreted, relaxed and accessible events, as we continue our aim to bring diverse stories and the wonder of Imagine to as many children as possible. After the challenges of the past year, we're really looking forward to seeing families use art to have fun and discover something incredible together at the Southbank Centre's Imagine."

Free events include: poetry for kids in the ***Little Library*** (9 – 20 Feb); an auditory, visual and interactive voyage with ***Groove Baby Presents: Groove Sensation*** (11 Feb); a hip-hop dance class in the ***ZooNation Youth Company Takeover*** (16 Feb); a family party at ***Do Your Own Thing DJ Takeover with Heart n Soul*** (18 Feb), ***LunchBox Jukebox*** (12 – 20 Feb) for kids to curate a DJ set, and many more!

Further highlights of the festival include:

Theatre, performance and comedy:

- ***intotheclouds*** (9 – 10 Feb) welcomes babies to the Cloud Factory in a playful, sensory and highly visual theatre experience.
- ***We Touch, We Play, We Dance*** (9 – 11 Feb) offers a gentle performance for little ones to discover the power of dance through an interactive show performed by four dancers and a live mixed score.
- ***The Mighty Kids Comedy Beatbox Show*** (20 Feb) sees comedy and beatboxing collide in a family show, where you laugh through your pantaloons.

Classical and contemporary music:

- **Mmm Ah Whoosh** (12 – 13 Feb) welcomes under-fives to a wondrous world of music and animation inspired by our first breaths, hums and gurgles, in a family-friendly gig with Mellow Baku.
- **Far Far Away** (14 – 15 Feb) sees Aurora Orchestra invite young music-lovers to step into a world of singing ducks, dancing shoes and space rockets, as they perform *Tchaikovsky and the Magical Toy Box*, weaving Tchaikovsky's music into a multi-sensory performance.
- **YolanDa's Band Jam** (16 Feb) is a live version of the much-loved CBeebies TV show from saxophonist YolanDa, who introduces kids to the joys of music with singing, dancing and playing.
- **Gaspard's Foxtrot** (16 Feb) sees the latest tale in the delightful *Gaspard the Fox* series narrated by the book's author, Zeb Soanes, and soundtracked by the Philharmonia Orchestra.
- **Do Your Own Thing DJ Takeover with Heart n Soul** (18 Feb) brings a free family party to the Royal Festival Hall, taking over The Clore Ballroom with their favourite tunes. Heart n Soul brings us dancing, performances and a brilliant display of art created during lockdown.

Literature:

- **Adam Kay** (19 Feb), comedian and former doctor, invites kids on a hilarious and deliciously disgusting tour of the history of medicine and the human body, as he answers questions like 'why did hairdressers cut off their customers' legs?' and 'why did people get paid for farting?'.
- **Nadia Shireen** (19 Feb) shows how she draws the wildly funny characters of *Grimwood* and reads from the laugh-your-head-off series in this interactive family event.
- **Elle McNicoll** (19 Feb) uncovers her mystical new book, *Like a Charm*, in conversation with Aisha Bushby. *Like a Charm* is a beautifully written, compelling magical fantasy with McNicoll's trademark compassion and celebration of difference.
- **Joseph Coelho** (20 Feb) shares his latest picture book, *My Beautiful Voice*, illustrated by Allison Colpoys, about a little girl who finds courage through poetry and invites all the family to have fun guessing poetic riddles, pulling poetic faces and discovering just how easy it is to be courageous with poetry.

More information available [here](#). Full festival listings, including BSL and Relaxed Performance information, available [here](#).

Tickets to shows announced today go on sale to Southbank Centre Members on 7 December and to the general public on 8 December southbankcentre.co.uk.

ENDS

For further information, press accreditation and to discuss interviews and feature opportunities please contact: Alex Kemsley, alex.kemsley@southbankcentre.co.uk

Images available to download [here](#).

Join the conversation

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#ImagineChildrensFestival

NOTES TO EDITORS

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 four Resident

Orchestras (London Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment) and four Associate Orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain).

Keeping audiences safe on site

As we welcome visitors back, our number one priority is the safety, health and wellbeing of visitors and staff, so we have introduced a number of measures to help everyone feel confident. We will continue to review and manage any risks and respond to any changes in government guidance. Full details of our Covid-secure measures can be found on the Southbank Centre website [here](#).



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