



## Press Release

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

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

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## Southbank Centre's Imagine Children's Festival is back with fun-filled performances and creative experiences

- London premiere of Motionhouse's **Starchitects: A Cosmic Adventure** and the family-friendly production **Chotto Dosh**, from Olivier award-winning choreographer **Akram Khan**
- A range of storytelling events from leading writers, speakers, poets and TV personalities including **John Agard**, **Joseph Coelho**, **Dr Ronx**, **Rosie Jones** and **Michael Rosen**
- Free events including **Prancer the Dancer's DanceDanceDiscoPartyFunShow**, **Mish Mash Family Trail** and **Shelf: The Kids show!**
- **Bob and Roberta Smith** and **Jessica Voorsanger** create an imaginative space for everyone to unlock their creativity
- Relaxed festival that is inclusive and welcoming to all



L-R: The Sticky Dance © Zoe Manders; Chotto Dosh © Camilla Greenwell; Starchitects © Dan Tucker

The Southbank Centre's renowned and celebrated **Imagine Children's Festival** returns from **7 to 17 February** with a programme of creative, imaginative and fun-filled experiences for all the family to

enjoy this February half term. With **over 130 events** packed into eleven days and **40% of the festival completely free**, Imagine makes world-class artistic experiences accessible to everyone.

Now in its **22nd year**, Imagine Children's Festival is the UK's leading arts festival for children aged **0 - 11 years** and their grown-ups. This year's festival features a multi-artform programme bursting with music, storytelling, dance, crafts, comedy and free events, bringing children and families together to explore new activities and spark imaginations.

Imagine Children's Festival is a **relaxed festival**, which allows visitors to enter and leave our venues and events freely. There is also an open attitude towards audience noise and movement. In addition, there will be specific sensory-adapted shows, BSL-interpreted and non-verbal performances programmed, allowing a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all.

**Ruth Hardie, Head of Public Programming at the Southbank Centre**, says: *"Imagine is about children and families being creative together. Through a range of innovative performances, literature events, music and more, we work with artists to share inspiring stories and ideas and encourage children to play, imagine and express themselves. There really is something magical for everyone to discover in the programme this February half term."*

Dance and performance is at the heart of the festival with gravity-defying choreography and digital projections featuring in the London premiere of **Starchitects: A Cosmic Adventure** (15 - 17 February), which has been shortlisted for the Fantastic for Families Awards 2023. **Akram Khan Company** returns with a much-loved family-friendly production, **Chotto Desh** (9 - 10 February), adapted from Khan's Olivier award-winning DESH by Theatre-Rites' director **Sue Buckmaster**.

Visitors are invited to find their groove with interactive, engaging, tactile and colourful performance installation in a new world premiere **The Sticky Dance** (7 - 9 February), a Southbank Centre commission with The Place, created by **Rosie Heafford** and **Takeshi Matsumoto** with sensory adapted versions (8 February). **Boxed In** (10 - 11 February), a **Daryl & Co** and **Half Moon** co-production, is a heartfelt performance exploring the unspoken barriers of attitudes, social etiquette and behaviour that surround us. **ZooNation's Hip Hop Half Term** (11 February) will also feature workshops, a DJ jam and an exclusive performance from **ZooNation Youth Company**. **The River** (12 February) is **Bamboozle Theatre Company's** newest show for disabled children with complex needs. This show introduces children to a range of river animals, from salmon to herons, and even mystical creatures such as the water goddess, with live music and instruments with tactile vibrations.

With music aplenty across the site, families can take a deep breath and dive underwater in the concert hall submarine with the **BBC Symphony Orchestra** including CBeebies favourites **JoJo and Gran Gran** in **CBeebies Ocean Adventure** (13 February). Classical music further joins the line-up with **Rockaby** (13 - 15 February), a music experience inspired by an Arabic lullaby that the Syrian composer Jaber Fayad listened to during his childhood. Visitors can also expect bold music and brilliant puppetry in **The Instrumentals** (10 - 11 February), a first participatory gig experience for little ones with **The David Gibb Big Band** (7 February), and a live version of hit CBeebies TV show **YolanDa's Band Jam and Friends** (12 February).

Families can giggle along to sketch comedy with **Shelf: The Kids Show!** (13 February), winners of the Best Show at The UK Kids' Comedy Festival and Leicester Comedy Festival 2023, which will include an interactive workshop for the whole family to make their own sketches. **Rosie Jones: The**

**Amazing Edie Eckhart** (15 February) will also have the renowned TV comedian presenting her sparky new story about a young girl with cerebral palsy and her adventure to find new friends.

Exploring a wide range of themes from newly released literature, budding scientists are introduced to human anatomy through fascinating games and fun-filled quizzes at **Amazing Bodies with Dr. Ronx** (16 February) and the world's next medical engineers can discover pacemakers, bionic limbs and more in **Human 2.0** (15 February) with campaigner **Patrick Kane**. Meanwhile, garden lovers can meet Children's Laureate **Joseph Coelho** and award-winning illustrator **Fiona Lumbers** as they showcase their newest book **Luna Loves Gardening** in an exclusive pre-publication event with performance and storytelling (17 February). Legendary author and performance poet **John Agard** is set to delight with a selection of readings from **Windrush Child**, plus works from his other children's books, which include **When Creature Met Creature** and **Follow That Word**. Beloved British children's author **Michael Rosen** is also set to tell the story of **Gaston Le Dog** (11 February).

The festival includes a range of free events and activities including a creative zone inspired by the artist **Bob and Roberta Smith's** book *Art Makes People Powerful* where everyone can discover their inner artist through self-led creative activities. There's also a day of games, competition and laughter in **The Intergenerational Game: Lunar New Year Edition** (10 February), a day of singing and beatboxing workshops with the incredible choir **Trans Voices** (14 February), a dance space powered by collective and electric dance energy in **Prancer the Dancer's DanceDanceDiscoPartyFunShow** (12 February), and **Wellbeing Wind Down** (10 - 11, 13 - 16 February), a meditative space to help families manage stress while encouraging children's creativity. **The Mish Mash Family Trail** (7 - 16 February), a Southbank Centre commission designed by **Heart n Soul Feel Good Designers**, arrives as a free and immersive journey with interactive art installations.

With thanks to all our donors who have generously supported the Festival. Please find full details of all events at Imagine Children's Festival in the listings document [here](#).

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### 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).

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