

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Press Release

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LONDON'S ICONIC MUSIC VENUES REOPEN FOLLOWING TWO-YEAR REFURBISHMENT, WITH DYNAMIC NEW PROGRAMME



Southbank Centre's iconic Brutalist venues, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room, will reopen on Monday 9 April, following over two years' extensive redesign and refurbishment.

They open with a programme of events that pays tribute to the historic legacy of the venues, and the many legendary artists who have performed there over the past fifty years. A dynamic blend of contemporary and classical work sees vibrant performances, events, installations and a free programme for all ages across the venues.

A new era for Southbank Centre's venues sees an even greater focus on the best live music, bold programming, new artists, new commissions and artist residencies and an expanded 1000 capacity gigs space in the Queen Elizabeth Hall foyer.

The cultural landmarks open with world class, environmentally-improved new facilities for audiences and artists that highlight the unique heritage features of the

buildings. The design led by architects Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios (FCBStudios), focused on refurbishing the auditoria, foyer and artists' back of house facilities. Improved access, ventilation and lighting systems, and new production infrastructure enhance the experience for audience and performers alike. New leather upholstery revitalises the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room's distinctive and comfortable seating. This historic restoration has been made possible through generous support from Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund, thanks to National Lottery players, and through Southbank Centre friends, trusts and foundations supporting the Let The Light In campaign.

Southbank Centre's reopening programme runs from Monday 9 April, offering audiences a packed programme of new music and performance which reflects Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room's pioneering history of incubating new ideas, work and artists. With over 100 events in the first two months alone, including 32 premieres and new commissions, Resident and Associate Ensembles and Artists appear alongside emerging talent and cutting-edge work.

Highlights include:

- A special opening night concert in Queen Elizabeth Hall from Associate Orchestra **Chineke! Orchestra**, Europe's only majority-BME orchestra, who were founded and made their debut in the venue in 2015 (9 April).
- An immersive, commemorative heritage exhibition, **Concrete Dreams**, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and designed by **Klanghaus** and **Andrew Lock**. This new Purcell Room exhibition gives visitors exclusive backstage access, and takes them on an historic journey through the diverse cultural archives of Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery, from 1960s Britain right through to the present day (10-29 April 2018).
- **Friday 13 April kicks off a packed weekend showcase of gigs and new talent**, showcasing Southbank Centre's commitment to nurturing and supporting emerging talent and female artists, with names including Afrobeat-pop newcomer **Aadae**, South London soul singer **Tawiah**, 18-piece big band **Abstract Orchestra**, modern minimalist **Matt Emery**, new jazz duo **Skeltr** and innovative multi-instrumentalist, singer-songwriter and composer **Hannah Peel** with **Tubular Brass**.
- **World premiere works during the reopening period** include Tyondai Braxton's *TELEKINESIS*, Holly Blakey x Mica Levi's *Cowpuncher*, Harrison Birtwistle's *Intrada*, Tom Coult's String Quartet No. 1, Daniel Kidane's *Dream Song*, Anna Meredith's orchestration of her debut studio album *Varmints*, Qasim Naqvi's *The Bad Feelings Rainbow*, Kaitlyn Aurelia Smith's *Action of Inaction*, Philip Venables' *The Gender Agenda*, new works from Charlotte Bray and Milica Djordjevic, and more.
- Launch of **Composers' Collective**, a new year-round initiative connecting composers at all stages of their careers with a huge variety of eminent composers passing through Southbank Centre via workshops, seminars, networking and more (13-15 April).

- **New festivals** include the first music festival in the refurbished QEH, *Ligeti in Wonderland* curated by Artist in Residence **Pierre-Laurent Aimard** (11-13 May); and *(B)old* showcasing and celebrating work of older artists, supported by The Baring Foundation (18-20 May).
- **New literature events** include a 60th anniversary reading of Chinua Achebe's seminal work *Things Fall Apart* with a stellar cast including Lucian Msamati; a reading of Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* featuring Lydia Wilson; and a bespoke event celebrating Fifty Poems from Five Decades, with 10 leading poets including Simon Armitage.
- **New performance and dance events** announced include Hotel Pro Forma's *NeoArctic* and Malavika Sarukkai's *The Loom*.
- **Concrete Dreams Weekend celebrates the heritage of QEH and Purcell Room**, showcasing music, dance, visual art and literature linked to the site's 50 year history features Shiva Feshareki, Anna Meredith, Shobana Jeyasingh Dance, Rambert Dance, Zoo Nation and Tomorrow's Warriors.
- **Other performer highlights include:** Ellah Allfrey, Laura Bates, Colin Currie, Danielle de Niese, Lara Feigel, Benjamin Grosvenor, Eimear McBride, London Contemporary Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Lucian Msamati, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Spira mirabilis, Chibundu Onuzo, and more.
- **Composer highlights include:** Thomas Adès, Gerald Barry, David Bedford, Unsuk Chin, Bryce Dessner, Jonathan Dove, Brian Ferneyhough, Christian Mason, Steve Reich and Rebecca Saunders.

Elaine Bedell, Chief Executive, Southbank Centre, said: *"Thanks to the generosity of our supporters we re-launch these cherished cultural arts venues back into the world, as welcoming, modern and creatively inspiring spaces that retain and build on their artistic heritage. With even more world class music and a focus on new and emerging talent, we're looking forward to seeing every generation of artists and audiences enjoy these revitalised buildings, which are a unique part of London's world-renowned cultural offering."*

Jude Kelly, Artistic Director, Southbank Centre, said: *"When these Brutalist buildings opened in the 1960s they represented a spirit of adventure, and a egalitarian view that art should be for all. With the re-launch of these beloved spaces, we hold fast to that belief, with a bold, ambitious and exciting programme that has audiences and artists of every background at its heart. It's thrilling to have the whole Southbank Centre site back to full force, truly reflecting our position as the UK's largest and most egalitarian arts centre."*

Gillian Moore, Director of Music, Southbank Centre, said: *"The Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room have, since they opened their doors in 1967, been a place where new ideas happen, where artists of all kinds have taken risks and pushed music and the arts forward. Half a century later, we re-open them after refurbishment and are determined to honour that*

spirit with new commissions, innovative artists and a fresh look at many of the great artistic events which form the history of these beautiful venues.”

PROGRAMME IN DETAIL BELOW

FULL DETAILS ON SOUTHBANK CENTRE'S [WEBSITE](#)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

- An opening night concert with Associate Orchestra **Chineke!**, featuring a new commission by Daniel Kidane based on Martin Luther King's *I Have A Dream* speech to mark the 50th anniversary of his assassination, performed by Roderick Williams (9 April)
- **Steve Reich's Different Trains** performed 30 years after its world premiere in Queen Elizabeth Hall by London Contemporary Orchestra with the London premiere of a new video by **Bill Morrison** (10 April)
- Resident Orchestra the **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment** present their return to QEH with conductor **Sir Roger Norrington**, who has a great history with the venues (11 April)
- **World premiere** of **Philip Venables'** politically-charged new work ***The Gender Agenda*** commissioned and performed by the **London Sinfonietta**. The concert turns QEH into a game show and the audience into contestants - recapturing the spirit of change that accompanied London Sinfonietta's first ever concert in QEH 50 years ago in 1968 (12 April)
- **World premiere** of **TELEKINESIS**, a large-scale work for orchestra, electronics and choir by **Tyondai Braxton**, one of the most exciting young artists in New York today, performed by the **BBC Concert Orchestra**, **BBC Singers** and conductor André de Ridder, alongside world premiere works from Qasim Naqvi's *The Bad Feelings Rainbow*, Kaitlyn Aurelia Smith's *Action of Inaction* (18 April)
- **Colin Currie & Nicholas Hodges** perform Stockhausen's masterpiece *Kontakte* alongside the world premiere of *Intrada*, a short new work by Sir Harrison Birtwistle commissioned by Southbank Centre (19 April)
- Darbar Festival presents *Music of India* featuring **Pandit Kushal Das** and **Pandit Tauran Bhattacharya** (21 April)
- International Chamber Music Series highlights, with **Danielle de Niese** in recital with **Navarra Quartet** (27 April)
- International Piano Series returns to QEH with soloists including **Benjamin Grosvenor** (26 April), **Khatia Buniatishvili** (9 May)
- **Ligeti in Wonderland**, a new festival curated by Artist-in-Residence **Pierre-Laurent Aimard** (Fri 11 - Sun 13 May) preceded by the 50th anniversary performance of **2001: Space Odyssey** with live orchestra, celebrating Southbank Centre's origination of the 'live film and music' project which now tours internationally (28 April)
- **Spira mirabilis** - the internationally-renowned chamber ensemble perform Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 (15 May)
- **Benjamin Grosvenor & friends presenting the Trout Quintet** - taking audiences back in time to a very special moment in 1969, when a group of young stars including Daniel Barenboim and Jacqueline du Pre took to the stage in the recently opened QEH for the first legendary performance of the piece (29 May)

GIGS AND CONTEMPORARY MUSIC:

- Friday 13 April kicks off a packed weekend showcase of emerging and innovative artists, including south London soul singer **Tawiah**, modern minimalist **Matt Emery**, new jazz duo **Skeltr**, and Afrobeat-pop newcomer **Aadae**, all for free, plus 18-piece big band **Abstract Orchestra** who blend orchestral jazz with hip-hop beats and MCs (13-14 April)
- Experimental pop musician and composer **Mica Levi**, only the fourth woman in Oscar history to be nominated for an original film score, join forces with acclaimed choreographer **Holly Blakey** in the world premiere of *Cowpuncher*, a dance and music performance that toys with the structure, sounds and vistas of the Western movie genre. *Cowpuncher* is a Southbank Centre commission and a collaboration between performance and dance and contemporary music (13 April)
- Electronic artist, arranger and composer **Hannah Peel** presents her own mesmerising repertoire, and with **Tubular Brass**, a 29-piece band featuring some of the UK's finest players, presents a radically-different revisit of Mike Oldfield's iconic 1973 album *Tubular Bells* (14 April)
- In a world-premiere, genre-defying composer **Anna Meredith** performs the much anticipated orchestral arrangement of her debut studio album *Varmints* with Southbank Sinfonia (28 April)
- **Jazz Ticket with Tomorrow's Warriors** - extraordinary young musicians from across the country perform and improvise with leading jazz professionals including **Soweto Kinch** (29 April)
- The legendary leader of Van Der Graaf Generator, **Peter Hammill**, performs songs ranging across his extensive career as he plays a rare London concert, following his new album *From The Trees* (20th April)
- Folk music star **Sam Lee** brings his outdoor 'Singing With Nightingales' concerts into the QEH, collaborating with both nightingales and special guest musicians (28 April)
- **Meltdown Festival's 25th anniversary, with special guest curator Robert Smith** of The Cure. Full programme to be announced later in spring (15-24 June)

LITERATURE:

- A 60th anniversary reading of Chinua Achebe's seminal work *Things Fall Apart*. The masterpiece, which has sold over 12 million copies and helped inspire authors, artists and musicians from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie to Kendrick Lamar, has been specially abridged by editor, critic and broadcaster **Ellah Allfrey**. The one-off reading, curated by Southbank Centre, features actor and Nollywood icon **Olu Jacobs**, Nollywood star **Adesua Etomi**, solo artist and Bloc Party lead singer **Kele Okereke**, film, television and stage actor **Lucian Msamati**, Ugandan novelist and award winning short story writer **Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi** and award-winning author **Chibundu Onuzo** (15 April)
- A reading of Doris Lessing's radical and innovative exploration of female liberation in the 1950s, *The Golden Notebook*. The landmark novel, which challenges the perceptions of how we talk about gender and empowerment, has been specially abridged by journalist and writer, **Claire Allfree**. The cast of readers include actress **Lydia Wilson**; multi-award winning author **Eimear McBride**; literary critic and author of *Free Woman*, part memoir and part biography of Doris Lessing, **Lara Feigel**; author **Bernardine Evaristo**; feminist campaigner, writer and founder of the Everyday Sexism Project **Laura Bates**, stage and television actress **Adjoa Andoh**, Chinese-British novelist and film-maker **Xiaolu Guo** and poet **Rachel Long** (22 April)

- ***Fifty Poems from Five Decades*** - ten of the finest poets writing in the UK today will join together for a one-off event to mark the five decades since the opening of the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room in 1967. The poets will take the audience on a journey through past social, political and cultural landscapes and will reinterpret movements and moments of the last 50 years through a poetic lens. Poets include **Simon Armitage**, international writer **Malika Booker**, poet, artist and documentary film-maker **Imtiaz Dharker**, Young People's Laureate for London **Caleb Femi** and the National Poet of Wales **Ifor ap Glyn** (29 April)
- These events will go on sale to Members on 22 February and to the general public on 23 February.

PERFORMANCE AND DANCE:

- Smart, brazen and straight-talking US comic **Iliza Shlesinger** returns to London for a laugh out loud performance in the Queen Elizabeth Hall (17 April). Other comedians in the line-up include **Richard Herring** (4 May, QEH) and **Tez Ilyas** (9 May, Purcell Room)
- Acclaimed choreographer **Holly Blakey** and composer **Mica Levi** join forces in the world premiere of *Cowpuncher*, a dance and music performance that toys with the structure, sounds and vistas of the Western movie genre. *Cowpuncher* is a Southbank Centre commission and a collaboration between performance and dance and contemporary music (13 April)
- Indian classical dancer and choreographer **Malavika Sarukkai** presents the UK premiere of *The Loom*, an innovative dance production inspired by the sari (24 April)
- Internationally acclaimed performance artists **Hotel Pro Forma** unite with the **Latvian Radio Choir** in the UK premiere of award-winning visual music performance **Neoarctic**. An artistic collaboration between researchers, scientists, composers, musicians, writers, artists, designers, filmmakers and scientists, *Neoarctic* explores humans as a 'force of nature' and the changes they make to the world they inhabit (24–25 May, QEH)
- The London premiere of *Hamnet*, a moving and technologically innovative solo show by Dead Centre centred around Shakespeare's only son (26 & 28 May, Purcell Room)
- Full season programme and new associate companies to be announced on 26 February 2018

VISUAL ART:

Purcell Room houses the launch of a special commemorative immersive heritage exhibition, ***Concrete Dreams*** designed by artist collective **Klanghaus** and **Andrew Locke** (10-29 April 2018). This new exhibition, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, takes visitors on a historical journey through the backstage areas of Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room revealing the cultural archives of Southbank Centre's iconic Brutalist buildings, focusing specifically on the radical thinking behind the first decade of the buildings' history. Visitors will be given unprecedented access to the newly refurbished behind-the-scenes artist areas encountering collections, installations and audio visual content that reveal the stories behind Southbank Centre's buildings, their early artistic beginnings and artistic mission. *Concrete Dreams* will bring to life the documentation surrounding the complex architectural creation of these public buildings and the extensive discussions between political, cultural and architectural stakeholders whilst developing these ambitious and progressive venues, which were especially designed for the arts they present. Another section of this immersive display will focus on key exhibitions from Hayward Gallery's 50-year history, including a special focus on *Kinetics* a pioneering show on kinetic art which took place in 1970, the first Bridget Riley retrospective which took place at the Hayward in 1971, and also looking at *The New Art*, a 1972

exhibition of emerging artistic talent which showcased important works from a range of now world-renowned artists.

A **new Beacon**, funded with the generous support of Heritage Lottery Fund will act as a crucial meeting point for visitors to the 17-acre site. The Beacon is also specially designed by artistic collective **Klanghaus** and **Andrew Locke** to illustrate the historical connection between the different buildings of the Southbank Centre site: Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room.

From **27-29 April**, the **Concrete Dreams Weekend** presents a celebration of the rich and varied performance history of the 1960's buildings, with Southbank Centre's own archive at the heart of activities. Over 3 days, the halls and foyers of the Queen Elizabeth Hall building will be filled with music, dance, literature and talks linked to the site's 50 year history, from the revolutionary revival of folk music to the birth of electronica and the development of contemporary South Asian dance.

This finale to the *Concrete Dreams* exhibition also features talks, a debate on the influence of 1960s architecture, alongside 'Meet the Archive' events bringing Southbank Centre's own archive to life, including 'A Child's Guide to Brutalism' event and *Five Decades on Screen*, an exclusive look at archive film footage from the past 50 years.

Pop up performances and workshops in the QEH foyer showcase performers and youth groups who hold a strong association with Southbank Centre, including **Streetwise Opera**, **Chineke! Juniors**, **Shobana Jeyasingh Dance**, **Rambert Dance**, **Cando2 Dance**, **The Bhavan Centre**, **Sonia Sabri Dance Company**, **Coral Dance Company**, **Vicki Ibokwe**, **Kinetika Bloco**, **Zoo Nation**, **Freddie Opoki**, **Drake Music** and Southbank Centre's own Gamelan ensemble.

The weekend celebration will also see the launch of a **new Hayward Gallery Publishing** book entitled **Fifty Years of Great Art Writing** which compiles 50 of the best essays written by art world experts and artists in past Hayward Gallery catalogues.

FESTIVALS

Ligeti in Wonderland (11-13 May 2018)

The first new music festival to take place in the newly-reopened Queen Elizabeth Hall is *Ligeti in Wonderland*, devoted to the life and works of Gyorgi Ligeti, one of the most important avant-garde composers of the latter half of the twentieth century, who had a strong association with Southbank Centre. Curated by acclaimed French pianist, Southbank Centre Artist in Residence and Ligeti pupil Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Ligeti's music is explored in depth with solo recitals, chamber music, and an afternoon of concerti featuring Aurora Orchestra under conductor Nicholas Collon and three of the world's great Ligeti interpreters: Patricia Kopatchinskaja performs the Violin Concerto, Pierre-Laurent Aimard – the composer's chosen interpreter of his piano works – performs the Piano Concerto, and horn-player Marie-Luise Neunecker is soloist for the Hamburg Concerto, of which she is the dedicatee. The weekend festival features free musical events and activities for all ages including a family concert presented by Southbank Sinfonia.

Southbank Centre's Ligeti focus begins the previous month with the 50th anniversary performance of **2001: Space Odyssey** with live orchestra, celebrating Southbank Centre's origination of the 'live film

and music' project which now tours internationally (28 April), and a special edition of the year-long series *What You Need to Know*, a study day focusing on Ligeti's music and influence (5 May).

(B)old (19-21 May 2018)

(B)old is a new festival celebrating older age and the creativity this brings, profiling established and emerging national, and international, older artists. Supported by The Baring Foundation and featuring artists aged 65 years and over, the one-off three day weekend festival will explore the impact of creating and experiencing art at an older age. (B)old will examine and challenge cultural perceptions of growing older - both in the arts and in modern society - and will celebrate age as a powerful force. The full programme to be announced on Thursday 8 March. (B)old goes on-sale to Members on Thursday 8 March and on general sale on Friday 9 March.

COMPOSERS' COLLECTIVE

With the reopening of Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room in April comes the launch of **Composers' Collective**, a new initiative giving composers at all stages of their career access to pioneering composers featured throughout Southbank Centre's season, via seminars, workshops, networking, surgeries and performance. Featuring **Esa-Pekka Salonen, Unsuk Chin, Brian Ferneyhough, Mica Levi, Brett Dean, Gerald Barry, Charlotte Bray, Bryce Dessner** and more, Composers' Collective is a learning scheme for anyone with an interest in composition.

Inspired by Southbank Centre's new music programme for the 2018/19 season - rich in living composers - the Collective connects composers with the wealth of artistic talent that crosses Southbank Centre's threshold. Student and established composers at all stages of their careers are encouraged to network and socialise, attend open rehearsals, workshops and panel discussions, and share advice and experience through in-depth candid conversations.

Members of Composers' Collective learn to cultivate the skills required to earn a living as a composer. Industry professionals advise the Collective on essentials, including where to find funding, commissions and awards, how to manage rehearsals with performers, marketing and self-promotion, and how to approach and work with publishers and artist management.

ENDS

For more information or to buy tickets please visit the Southbank Centre website [HERE](#) or call 020 3879 9555

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Join the Conversation:

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[HERE](#) are the visual arts highlights

[HERE](#) is the classical music April 2018 highlights

[HERE](#) is the gigs Spring 2018 release

Full Performance & Dance programme to be announced

Full Literature programme to be announced

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Southbank Centre

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 17 acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain.

Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery as well as The National Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. For further information please visit www.southbankcentre.co.uk.