

# SOUTHBANK CENTRE

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## Press Release

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## Southbank Centre announces guest curators for *Summer Reunion* weekends

The curators are **Anoushka Shankar, Scottee, Dennis Bovell, Nish Kumar, Jess Thom, Amrou Al-Kadhi, Nubya Garcia, Jade Hackett** in collaboration with DJ **Walde** and **Shingai**.



Caption: Pxssy Palace x BBZ on the Riverside Stage 2019. Photo: Takis Zontiros.

The Southbank Centre today announces that for the first time ever, nine guest curators are to programme artistic activity on the outdoor Riverside Stage across weekends from 4 July to 29 August, as part of the *Summer Reunion* programme, free of charge to the public.

*Summer Reunion* kicks off with a special opening weekend from 25 – 27 June bringing together the Southbank Centre's long-term partners and collaborators including Kinetika Bloco and Tomorrow's Warriors. A party with Just VibeZ opens the weekend with DJ, MC's and dancers to celebrate Windrush Day and the rich culture of the Caribbean.

The curatorial artists come from a range of artistic backgrounds – from theatre, music, comedy, dance and spoken word. They are **Anoushka Shankar, Dennis Bovell, Scottee, Nish Kumar, Jess Thom,**

**Amrou Al-Kadhi, Nubya Garcia, ZooNation's Jade Hackett in collaboration with DJ Walde and Shingai.** Each weekend programme is formed from their own artistic visions, and the Riverside Stage becomes their very own programming platform, for them to interrogate what they've learnt, what happens next, and what's important for them to say now. The theme of 'Reunion' underpins all ten weekends, offering audiences and artists the opportunity to come together.

**Ruth Hardie, Senior Producer, the Southbank Centre,** said: "This past year has been painful for all of us, and the arts sector has particularly felt the effects of the pandemic. We've missed being able to bring people together to connect through shared experiences and missed our site feeling alive and animated by artists. That's why we felt it important that this summer on the Riverside Stage we open with a special weekend that celebrates the Southbank Centre's long-term partners and collaborators who we've missed so much, and then that we hand over directly to artists themselves to curate their own weekend programmes. Each weekend will be totally unique as artists share with us what they want to say at this collective moment of reunion. It will be a true celebration of the artists and communities we've missed, with moments of joy and reflection that reunite us all."

### **Opening weekend featuring Southbank Centre partners, 25 – 27 June**

The opening weekend on the Riverside Stage is a special moment for the Southbank Centre to welcome back its closest collaborators, local communities and friends, who make the spaces what they are. The weekend is a celebration of the wonderful artists and audiences who have all been missed, kicking off on Friday 25 June with 'Sounds of the Caribbean with Just VibeZ' presenting DJ, MC's and dancers to celebrate Windrush Day and the rich culture of the Caribbean. Saturday 26 June celebrates 'Sound of the Southbank' with loved local musicians and 'The Sunday Social' features professionally-led dance workshops.

### **Anoushka Shankar curates 2 – 4 July**

Associate Artist at the Southbank Centre Anoushka Shankar curates a colourful programme of live music, spoken word and dance. Opening with a Brilliant Corners takeover on Friday night, the weekend features chilled music sets to evening party vibes as Shankar invites her closest friends and collaborators down to the riverside to reconnect this summer. Under the title 'Confluence', Saturday is jam packed with Indian classical music and dance before the party starts with Nerm & DJ Manara, specially selected as resident DJs for the day, before moving into a high-energy evening featuring a live-performance from BISHI and other unannounced guests. 'Hazy Sunday' gives audiences the chance to unwind with ambient DJ sets and a secret special guest performance to be announced.

**Anoushka Shankar (curator from 2 – 4 July),** said: "I hear 'Reunion'! The idea of people coming together and enjoying artworks that we've been restricted from experiencing in person for so long feels overwhelming. A lot of people taking part in the weekend, like myself, will have been personally affected by the ongoing tragedy in India, and it can be hard to contextualise the fact that we are celebrating and slowly relaxing here whilst it's all falling apart for our loved ones there. The weekend I am curating is for all ages, and about fun, joy, celebration, discovery and a bit of reflection, because the freedoms we are gaining here are precious."

### **Scottee curates 9 – 11 July**

Writer and performance artist Scottee curates and presents 'Council Culture', a celebration of Council joy featuring theatre, performance and UK Garage DJ sets. Platforming artists from a working class background, Scottee explores what it means to be together again and what it means to experience live performance in person with one another again. Scottee also explores and questions the role of arts centres and public spaces post pandemic.

**Scottee (curator from 9 – 11 July)**, said: "The reason I want to do this and that I'm interested in these artists is that the culturally dominant narrative regards people from Council Culture as broken, in need of fixing and deprived. Some of that is true, but there's also a lot of council joy and spirit. I have a lot of pride being from social housing and growing up around the people that I did so this is a showcase of some of that brilliance and muckyness and that pride."

### **Dennis Bovell curates 16 – 18 July**

Iconic reggae multi-instrumentalist and producer, Dennis Bovell curates a weekend rich with music and spoken word, opening with an unmissable Lovers Rock night with friends. In keeping with the Reunion theme, long-time collaborator Janet Kay – with whom Dennis created the 1979 chart single 'Silly Games' – joins the line-up, alongside other Lovers Rock royalty including Carroll Thompson and Victor Romero. Saturday night features soundclash with Gladdy Wax and Dennis' Sound system and on Sunday, musicians from artist development organisation Tomorrow's Warriors take to the Riverside Stage as Dennis champions local Brent and Harrow talent.

**Dennis Bovell (curator from 16 – 18 July)**, said: "It was an honourable ask to curate a weekend as part of Reunion that I was obliged to respond to in the only way I know best and that is to present all the different types of entertainment that have been born right here in the UK as much as I can. My vision for the weekend is to capture in real life all the things that have hitherto been enjoyed only on our telephone screens. Now that we're reuniting, we can get a closer look at these performers and what they have been offering in a time of great difficulty and hope will continue to offer."

### **Nish Kumar curates 23 – 25 July**

Comedian Nish Kumar curates a weekend which celebrates how comedy has adapted throughout the pandemic. With a look at the past, the present and the future, Nish blends a programme of comedy, cabaret and theatre together, platforming new and established acts.

**Nish Kumar (curator from 23 – 25 July)**, said: "I'm excited – I've always seen myself as a curator, by which I mean I enjoy inflicting my taste on people regardless of their interests. We've got some very exciting plans. You'd better believe it. Amongst other things, I'm in negotiations with the guy that owns the Tupac hologram. I'm hoping that my programme will cut a broad swathe through the arts and also have a healthy dose of comedy which as we all know is not "art". I think the most important thing is to celebrate us being able to be together again!"

Nish's Friday programme is a celebration of work comedians have been making and producing during the pandemic (23 July). Saturday (24 July) and Sunday (25 July) will see Nish working in collaboration

with organisations that platform diverse voices across the comedy and cabaret scene for a weekend not to be missed.

### **Jess Thom curates 30 July – 1 August**

British theatre-maker and comedian Jess Thom, best known for Tourettehero, plans to showcase the diversity and richness of disability culture. Featuring music, dance, live art, visual arts, participatory practise and play, for families, children and young people, Jess' programme aims to create new experiences, and imagine a more inclusive future.

**Jess Thom (curator from 30 July – 1 August)**, said: "I'm really excited to be a guest curator for one of the Reunion weekends. As a Londoner the Southbank Centre is somewhere I strongly associate with hanging out and sharing creative experiences with friends. I can't wait to get stuck into planning a weekend full of inclusive joy. At the same time, I want to make sure we make space to think about those we can't be reunited with.

There's growing apprehension amongst disabled creatives, particularly those who have been shielding, that we risk further marginalisation as the cultural sector swings back into action. There's a real concern that the barriers our communities have fought for generations to remove will abruptly reemerge.

The Reunion weekends are a powerful opportunity to show all audiences that they're valued, thought about and welcome. Expect a playful, accessible, multisensory programme with an emphasis on laughter and imaginative possibilities."

### **Amrou Al-Kadhi curates 6 – 8 August**

British-Iraqi writer, drag performer and filmmaker Amrou Al-Kadhi returns to the Southbank Centre for the first time since the exhibit of their self portrait *Glamrou* in Hayward Gallery's *Kiss My Genders* exhibition (2019), this time to curate a weekend of drag, performance art, storytelling, music and dance on the Riverside Stage.

**Amrou Al-Kadhi (curator from 6 – 8 August)**, said: "Bringing queer content from diaspora communities to new audiences in London is incredibly exciting for me. As a queer Arab Muslim myself, I want to use the weekend to celebrate marginalised queer voices, and to showcase communities that form their own powerful systems of care, love, and support. I want to champion the power of intersectionality, and celebrate the magic that ensues when different marginalised voices come together and support each other. Prepare to be enchanted, uplifted, and surprised!"

Amrou's programme involves snippets of performances from their recent show *From Quran to Queen*.

### **Nubya Garcia curates 13 – 15 August**

Performer-composer Nubya Garcia curates a non-stop weekend embracing the joy of live music-making returning to London. As one of the city's most dynamic artists, Garcia has invited a selection of emerging artists coming out of the London scene – exciting to reunite after a year on

pause! Each day of the weekend culminates in a headline act to be announced. Garcia is counted amongst Tomorrow's Warriors' alumni, 2020 saw her release her debut album to much critical acclaim.

**Nubya Garcia (curator from 13 – 15 August)**, said: "It has been a mad year, and it feels great to be able to bring artists together to a public audience at the Southbank Centre. I'm looking forward to curating a beautiful weekend of music, poetry and creative programming which I hope offers people the chance to come across new music, as well as come and support the people they are already fans of. I want to provide a space to unite people, with those they love, or those they don't yet know."

### **ZooNation's Jade Hackett in collaboration with DJ Walde curates 20 – 22 August**

Choreographer and performer Jade Hackett of the Southbank Centre's Associate Company ZooNation: The Kate Prince Company curates a celebratory weekend of dance and hip-hop in collaboration with ZooNation's musical director DJ Walde. In a weekend focused on reconnection, the collaborators bring back the social vibes and community feeling of hip-hop culture with an array of established and new artists on the scene.

**Jade Hackett and DJ Walde (curators from 20 – 22 August)**, said: "We're excited to share with you all a weekend of moves 'n' grooves to bring you back to the good times, and we're looking forward to showing you a glimpse of a brighter, funkier future!"

### **Shingai curates 27 – 29 August**

The Noistette's lead vocalist, Shingai closes the Southbank Centre's artist-curated weekends with a celebration of music, performance and circus. Hailing from South East London, Shingai uses her weekend to showcase the local artistic community with an array of artists to be announced. Part of the weekend also sees Shingai take a look at the significant contributions of alternative Black female talent who have been all too often overlooked.

**Shingai (curator from 27 – 29 August)**, said: "My vision is about promoting unity, celebrating originality and a diverse spectrum of voices – voices often overlooked in the mainstream. I want to celebrate the DIY culture of London that we see in a lot of sound systems, punk bands and events that spring up in wild and wonderful places across the city. I also want to celebrate the musical frequencies that I feel elevate us and allow people much needed respite from being indoors.

Music across the sonic spectrum is a genuine passion for me and I only hope that the versatility that I enjoy and bring to both this weekend and the international music scene will stem this emerging trend of the Black female artist being expected to perform quite generic roles on and off the stage.

This is about horizons unlimited – not letting people tell you you're too much, too dark, too bold. It's about making new friends and going on a creative South London safari!"

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The Riverside Stage programme is free and unticketed. Attendance will be on a first-come first served basis. The programme will be online at [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk) from 2 June.

### **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 both indoors and out. These include QR codes at entrances which link to NHS Test and Trace, reduced visitor numbers, social distancing, wearing face coverings, physically distanced seating, fresh air circulation measures and regular and thorough cleaning. 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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### **Further events for *Summer Reunion* also announced:**

#### **MUSIC**

#### **‘This Classical Life: Live’ – Wednesday 7 July, 7.30pm**

In a UK first, Jess Gillam celebrates her ARIA-winning weekly BBC Radio 3 show and podcast, ‘This Classical Life’ with **the BBC Concert Orchestra** and special guests, live from the Royal Festival Hall on **7 July** at 7.30pm. Guest performers will include composer, drummer and producer **Ollie Howell** who has written music for multi-award-winning films and TV series; soprano **Soraya Mafi**; singer **Orlando Weeks** former frontman of The Maccabees and songwriter, vocalist and cellist **Ayanna Witter-Johnson**.

Exploring their musical influences and favourite styles, Jess and her guests will share and perform an eclectic range of music they love. Celebrating the power of live music, the concert promises to be an exhilarating and emotional evening conducted by the London Contemporary Orchestra’s **Hugh Brunt**. *This Classical Life: Live* will be broadcast on **BBC Radio 3** on **14 July** at 7.30pm.

Jess is passionate about inspiring and bringing joy to people through music and believes that good music is good music regardless of the genre or label. On her BBC Radio 3 show, audiences may hear The Prodigy next to Prokofiev, Hildegard von Bingen next to Bjork, Mendelssohn next to Michael Kiwanuka but there is one thing all of the sounds have in common: an ability to move us, transport us and connect us with alternative realities. Further information [here](#).

#### **Chineke! and the African-American Symphony – Saturday 10 July, 7.30pm**

Chineke! returns to the Royal Festival Hall with music from William Grant Still and Florence B. Price, two Black composers who both grew up in Little Rock, Arkansas around the turn of the 20th century. Still’s Symphony No.1 (Afro-American) was the first work by a Black composer to be performed by a leading US orchestra: the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra in 1931 and Price was the first Black woman to have music performed by a major symphony orchestra in the US, in 1933 – her Third Symphony will be heard here. To complete the evening, cellist, singer and pianist, Amiri Harewood makes his debut with Chineke! in Grieg’s evergreen Piano Concerto. Further information [here](#).

For further information on previously announced events at the Royal Festival Hall in *Summer Reunion*, please visit us [here](#).

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# ENDS #

**For further press information please contact:**

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**Join the Conversation:**

@southbankcentre

#SCSummerReunion

## **FURTHER EVENT INFORMATION**

### **About the Southbank Centre's *Summer Reunion***

From 19 May – 30 August, the Southbank Centre presents *Summer Reunion*, a four-month season of art, culture and entertainment providing opportunities for people to reconnect and reunite across the site following the venue's year-long closure. On 30 April the popular weekly street food market returns, alongside riverside pop-ups; the Hayward Gallery welcomes visitors back on 19 May for two major exhibitions with social-distancing in place in line with government guidance; the Royal Festival Hall reopens on 28 May alongside the National Poetry Library; and the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room reopen later this summer. 15 consecutive weekends of free programming on the Riverside Stage Terrace platform diverse, home-grown talent, while free public art and poetry from the likes of Samson Kambalu, Ilke Gers and Linton Kwesi Johnson bring the outside spaces to life, alongside the popular Queen Elizabeth Hall Roof Garden. The reopening of the Southbank Centre and *Summer Reunion* programme is made possible thanks to the repayable loan from the government's Culture Recovery Fund.

### **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. These include QR codes at entrances which link to NHS Test and Trace, reduced visitor numbers, social distancing, wearing face coverings, physically distanced seating, fresh air circulation measures and regular and thorough cleaning. 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.

### **Accessibility**

The Southbank Centre has also introduced a range of new measures to make sure all audiences can be welcomed back to the site after a year of closure for its four-month *Summer Reunion* programme. This includes enhanced measures for those with access requirements to ensure continuous provision in and around the site. Alongside its work with leading organisation, Attitude is Everything, the Southbank Centre has created a new team of Visitor Contact Assistants who will be specialists in helping people with access requirements purchase tickets and handle queries via phone, email, live chat and SMS. A new wheelchair layout in the Royal Festival Hall has been conceived with clear views of the stage, in line with wider social-distancing plans; there will be a dedicated entrance for people who require level access and assistance attending events; access to accessible toilets will be available on all levels; and accessible bar service with pre orders via an app, as well as other ordering options for those without a mobile device, has been arranged.

### **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).

**Southbank Centre Re-opening**

**Hayward Gallery:** 19 May 2021

**Royal Festival Hall:** 28 May 2021

**National Poetry Library:** 28 May 2021

**Queen Elizabeth Hall:** August 2021

**Purcell Room:** September 2021

Opening times for venues can be found on the [Southbank Centre website](#).



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