



Date: Tuesday 18 November, 10am

Contact: millie.oconnor@southbankcentre.co.uk and ely.chegrinec@southbankcentre.co.uk

Images: [HERE](#)

Event Listings: [HERE](#)

Festival Dates: Tuesday 10 - Friday 20 February 2026

Southbank Centre's *Imagine* returns with fun-filled creative events for families and young people



(L-R Clockwise: *The Show for Young Men* © Andrew Perry; *The Princess and the Pea* © Foteini Christofilopoulou; Jacqueline Wilson © David Spearing; *Fields of Tender* © Krsto Vulović)

London's leading festival for families returns to the Southbank Centre in its 24th year, transforming the UK's largest arts centre into a cultural playground. Running throughout the February half term (Wed 11 – Sat 21 Feb 2026), *Imagine* is the first festival of the Southbank Centre's 75th anniversary

celebrations, bringing unbeatable cultural experiences for 0 – 11+ years and their families to enjoy together.

Introducing children to the wonder of arts and creativity, *Imagine* offers interactive experiences which inspire the Southbank Centre's youngest visitors and their families to try new things for the first time with a captivating programme spanning best-selling children's authors, music, dance, circus, visual arts and a host of free events.

Bringing families together to spark their imaginations, the festival includes **An Evening with Jacqueline Wilson** and Rachael Dean (15 Feb) where Jacqueline will talk about her beloved 'Sleepovers' series and be joined by her illustrator Rachael Dean, leading a live draw-along.

Following the talk, *Imagine* continues to celebrate the magic of sleepovers with a brand new event offering a chance to explore the festival after dark with **The Sleepover Club** (15 Feb). Children aged 7-11 years old and accompanying adults are invited to explore the Southbank Centre and uncover new stories before camping in the Royal Festival Hall overnight. With snacks and stories provided all that members of the Sleepover Club will need are a sleeping bag, pyjamas and an appetite for adventure.

Jacqueline Wilson, children's author, says, *"Imagine is a space for every child to delve into the depths of their creativity and imagination. I'm thrilled to be taking part during the Southbank Centre's 75th year with a very special Sleepover Club in the Royal Festival Hall, bringing stories and dreams to life in an evening of exploration and adventure."*

Highlights of *Imagine* include:

- Opening with three days of activities catering to early years (0-5) including **Early Weaves**, a non-verbal introduction to dance theatre (11 Feb) exploring sound and movement through the process of weaving willow. A London premiere of the international touring show **Fields of Tender** immerses audiences in an enchanting world of relaxation and love with a mix of dance, music and interactive video for ages 6 months - 2 years.
- From the magical world of **Sir Quentin Blake**, puppetry and live music bring to life **Quentin Blake's Mrs Armitage on Wheels** in the world premiere of this musical adaptation of the animated series Box of Treasures (18- 21 Feb). The renowned children's illustrator will also produce a new public artwork for the Southbank Centre's 75th anniversary programme, featuring a parade of performers to be displayed during *Imagine*.
- Hosted by three deaf dance artists, the London premier of **Mini SPIN**, the interactive dance rave for ages 5-11 years, celebrates the connections between Deaf culture, dance and music in a vibrant experience accessible to all (13-15 Feb).
- For older children, **The Show for Young Men** uses humour and heartfelt choreography to consider modern-day masculinity as it affects both boys and men (13 Feb - 15 Feb). **Pop-Up Parkour with Ascension** (17 Feb - 19 Feb) offers a high-energy experience for children to explore three interactive parkour stations guided by experienced coaches.
- Celebrate the power of great storytelling with live book events including **An Afternoon with Liz Pichon**, creator of the beloved *Tom Gates* and *The Mubbles* series, (18 Feb), an interactive session with author-illustrator **RAMZEE** (18 Feb) and a celebration of the fun-filled world of Lottie Brooks from bestselling author **Katie Kirby** (21 Feb).
- A playful and energetic theatrical retelling of Hans Christian Anderson's **The Princess and the Pea** features breathtaking acrobatics, clowning and fairytale adventure for children aged 2

– 8 years (14 -20 Feb).

- Patrons of the Anti-Bullying Alliance and stars of the CBBC hit series **Andy and the Odd Socks** encourage inclusivity and celebrate difference with a playful afternoon of live music and mayhem (15 Feb).

As a relaxed Festival, *Imagine* offers an inclusive and welcoming environment for all. *Imagine* includes many specific BSL-interpreted, Speech-to-Text and sensory adapted events.

Ruth Hardie, Head of Public Programming at the Southbank Centre, said “As the longest running festival of its kind in the UK, *Imagine* provides an essential space for children and families to explore their curiosity, imagination and creativity together. We know access to art and culture from a young age supports wellbeing and helps children understand the world around them, and through world-class performances and daily free-to-access events, *Imagine* offers a host of formative artistic experience for every family”

Mark Ball, Artistic Director of the Southbank Centre, said, “Our 75th anniversary is inspired by the forward-looking spirit of the Festival of Britain. We have always been a space for families to enjoy and an arts centre that has encouraged children to tap into their creativity. We believe that all young people, regardless of background, deserve access to arts and creativity which is why we established *Imagine* - as a space to cultivate creative expression from a young age, to inspire the next generation of artists and performers through cultural experiences that will last a lifetime”.

Tickets go on sale to Southbank Centre Members on **Wednesday 19 November 2025** and to the general public on **Thursday 20 November 2025**.

NOTES TO EDITORS

For more information and for press tickets please contact press@southbankcentre.co.uk

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), two resident organisations (Kinetika Bloco and Tomorrow's Warriors) and six resident orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Philharmonia Orchestra).

Website: <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk>

Facebook: Southbank Centre

Instagram: @southbankcentre

TikTok: @southbankcentre



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

