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Press Release

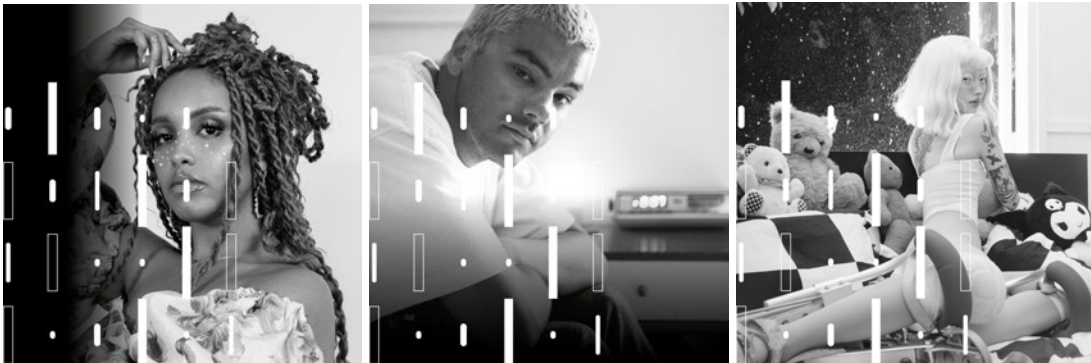
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Press images: [HERE](#)

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Purcell Room to reopen for the first time in 18 months to become London's destination for contemporary culture with major new series 'Purcell Sessions'



Credits (L-R): FAUZIA; Jamie Isaac; yeule

- The Purcell Room is set to transform into London's destination for contemporary culture with brand new series, ***Purcell Sessions***
- *Purcell Sessions* is a **year-long programme of over 100 events**, featuring some of the UK's most creatively adventurous and sought-after artists
- The series is to feature some of next year's most talked about cultural moments, from **audiovisual installations to exclusive album launches**, as well as new **collaborations, new commissions and cross-genre concepts**
- Initial line-up includes major names across contemporary culture, including **FAUZIA, Coby Sey, Lyra Pramuk, Abyss X, Nabihah Iqbal and Libby Heaney and more**
- **Holly Blakey and Jeremy Deller** will be collaborating for the first time alongside **Gwilym Gold, Dave Okumu, Oliver Coates and The Smile's Tom Skinner**, as well as long-time collaborators **Philharmonia Orchestra** with violinist **Pekka Kuusisto, London Sinfonietta** and new artistic partners, **Manchester Collective**
- *Purcell Sessions* builds on a history of the Purcell Room as a crucible for major international names, including **David Bowie (1969), Patti Smith (2005) and Nick Cave (2009)**

The Southbank Centre is reopening the Purcell Room at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in September after 18 months with a major new artistic strand, *Purcell Sessions*, as the venue gets set to transform into London's number one destination for contemporary culture.

Featuring a year-long programme of over 100 events, Purcell Room will be the 'room for the curious', including a line-up of UK and international artists across music, dance, visual art, literature, the spoken word and multimedia.

Championing artistic expression across genres, *Purcell Sessions* will present some of today's most sought-after creatives who are setting the pace for the future of their form. The Purcell Room will be a place where they will be free to experiment and make bold creative decisions. All artists will share an ambition to explore undiscovered artistic territories and forge new creative frontiers, whether presenting bold audiovisual installations, giving an exclusive first look at new material, or developing multimedia, multigenre collaborations.

The new series is set to feature some of next year's most talked about cultural moments, from audiovisual installations from the likes of **Nabihah Iqbal** and **Libby Heaney**, **FAUZIA**, **Iglooghost** and **yuele** to exclusive album workshops and launches from **Lyra Pramuk** and **Jamie Isaac**, as well as new collaborations, commissions and cross-genre concept pieces with **Keisha the Sket**, **Neil Cowley**, **Ruth Ozeki**, **BISHI**, **Robert Ames** and **more**. Long-term artistic partners across contemporary and classical music will also feature, including the **Philharmonia Orchestra**, **London Sinfonietta** and **Pekka Kuusisto**.

Since Purcell Room first opened in 1967, named after the 17th century innovator Henry Purcell, the venue has been a crucible of international names, including a young David Bowie who played at the iconic space in November 1969 shortly after the release of 'Space Oddity'.

Purcell Sessions launches on Thursday 16 September to build on that legacy with **Sarah Davachi** and the **London Contemporary Orchestra**. Two days later, **Jeremy Deller** and **Holly Blakey** come together for the first time alongside musical artists **Gwilym Gold**, **Dave Okumu**, **Oliver Coates** and **The Smile's Tom Skinner**.

Gillian Moore CBE, Director of Music and Performing Arts at the Southbank Centre, said: "*The Southbank Centre brings artists and audiences together for unique cultural experiences and we can't wait to take this one step further with Purcell Sessions, bringing its namesake's legacy right up to date with some of today's most daring creative talents. The legacy of the Purcell Room is woven deep into the fabric of this space, from the artists who've played to packed out audiences to the composers who've challenged with bold new work. As it reopens this September, Purcell Sessions will launch us into our next chapter, as this most intimate space becomes our nexus of creativity and innovation*".

Bengi Ünsal, Head of Contemporary Music at the Southbank Centre, said: "*Purcell Sessions represents an unrivalled new artistic venture for the Southbank Centre. Set to become London's room for the curious, this major annual series for the Purcell Room will see us usher in a new era of artists breaking new ground in contemporary culture. From yeule to Abyss X, these creators and innovators all share a passion to forge new artistic territories, to defy expectation and to present work in dialogue with the times. Purcell Sessions is already generating significant industry attention and we can't wait to see this grow and evolve, as artists choose Purcell Room as their destination for creative and artistic freedom.*"

The initial line-up includes: Holly Blakey and Jeremy Deller (18 Sep), Gnarly and Nikita Gill (1 Oct), Manchester Collective (2 Oct), Philharmonia Orchestra with Pekka Kuusisto - Music of Today (3 Oct & 28 Nov), Ruth Ozeki and Alam Nathoo (7 Oct), Ill Considered (10 Oct), Bishi (13 Oct), Abyss X (16 Oct), K Music (17 Oct & 6 Nov), Mieko Kawakami (23 Oct), Keisha the Sket (29 Oct), Lyra Pramuk (31 Oct), Robert Ames (4 & 5 Nov), Gigi Masin (26 & 27 Nov), Neil Cowley (4 & 5 Dec), Jamie Isaac (9 & 10 Dec), FAUZIA (11 & 12 Dec), Iglooghost (21 & 23 Jan), Nabihah Iqbal and Libby Heaney (28 & 30 Jan), London Sinfonietta (6 Feb), Laima (9 & 10 Feb) and yeule (5 & 6 March), WOOM (10 March) and major

projects with K-Music Festival and the London Contemporary Orchestra. Further dates will be announced soon.

As the programme develops, early career artists will be able to access multi-artform residencies to develop their craft and creatives interested in research and development can access in-house recording facilities to test ideas.

Tickets for *Purcell Sessions* will go on sale to Members on Thursday 2 September and on general sale on Friday 3 September. Please visit [HERE](#) for more information.

Conceptual work

Musicians, visual artists and the audience create a one-off work of art in 'Ill Considered: Creating a Liminal Space' (10 & 11 Oct). In this two-day residency, the band **Ill Considered** are joined by their long-standing collaborator **Vincent de Boer** and visual artist **Lisa Wormsley** to create a world around their sound. As the audience influences elements of the band's playing, the band improvises their own soundscapes. These are then captured in real time, as a live artwork created by de Boer, and in film by Wormsley. The end product of the night's improvisation is a singular musical experience, with its own cover art and video directed by the audience, experienced only by those present.

Since supporting SOPHIE at Nile Roger's Meltdown, the Southbank Centre has been waiting for the return of **Abyss X**. In 'Abyss X: Life Appeal', the Berlin-based multi-disciplinary artist intertwines live music, dance, text, theatre, lighting and meditation, awakening audiences after a year of stagnation and encouraging a cathartic visual and auditory experience that loosely tackles themes such as altered states, empathy, escapism, embodiment, the erotic, psychedelia and eco-grief (16 Oct).

This December, **Neil Cowley** pushes out into the ambient, electronic and non-classical water of his debut solo album *Hall of Mirrors* (4 & 5 December). The album displays his embrace of a new musical direction.

Breakout electronic DJ-turned-producer **FAUZIA** brings her debut London live show to *Purcell Sessions* (11 Dec). FAUZIA performs music from her recent releases, as well as forthcoming work she has been developing. She'll also push into new creative territories with an interactive installation retelling Somali history through sound and visuals.

In brand new commission 'Nabihah Iqbal x Libby Heaney: Cascade', musician **Nabihah Iqbal** and visual artist and quantum physicist **Libby Heaney** bottle the sounds, sights and meaning of water in an audio-visual performance (29 & 30 Jan). Through field recordings of the Thames, AI-generated sounds and visuals, as well as music and words, Iqbal and Heaney create an immersive world of real and artificial water-scapes. The Thames serves as a focal point for the pair, pushing them to explore the materiality, history, rituals and symbolism attached to both rivers and water.

World-building musician **Iglooghost** transforms the Purcell Room into an other-worldly audiovisual museum archiving the story of his latest electronic concept, Lei Music (21-23 Jan). Lei Music is said to be a lost tradition, capable of summoning squeaking entities from invisible zones, whose sounds are transcribed to Lei Disks. Iglooghost's work in this world has so far generated the release of the album *Lei Disk Eon* - an accompanying website explains its folklore. Iglooghost is a UK-based artist who creates

music, artwork and puzzles that all gravitate around a fictional ecosystem of strange entities and tiny gods. Each of Iglooghost's releases expand on this universe through multimedia content.

yeule brings their ethereal pop and glitchy electronica to *Purcell Sessions* for a new show 'yeule: Live' (5 & 6 March). yeule has become an artist synonymous with experimentation and metamorphosis, from building their own synths to challenging notions of identity and self expression. With a launchpad, keyboard and microphone they morph their original cinematic classical compositions into electronica with a show accompanied by a day-long AI-integrated installation.

New collaborations

Coming together for the first time, contemporary choreographer **Holly Blakey** and Turner Prize-winning artist **Jeremy Deller** present a new film with an improvised soundtrack treatment created and performed live by **Oliver Coates**, **Gwilym Gold**, **Dave Okumu** and The Smile's **Tom Skinner** (18 Sept). The film is played twice, but each time with a unique soundtrack, creating the potential for a subtly different, or starkly contrasting, experience.

British Sri Lankan music producer **Gnarly** and Irish Indian poet **Nikita Gill** combine in a pulsating exchange of poetry, music and visuals in 'Gnarly x Nikita Gill' (8 Oct). This dynamic performance combines Gnarly's electronic production skills and the spoken poetry of Nikita Gill in a pulsating, hypnotic conversation. The natural push and pull between the duo is a hypnotic conversation that creates an organic, integrated and deeply impactful stage presence. The two artists were brought together by Anoushka Shankar earlier this year at the Southbank Centre.

Audiences are invited to see both sides of Brazilian musician and activist **Laima** over two days in February (9 & 10 Feb). The subversive artist dedicates day one of their residency to the place of women in the creative industries, inviting ten women from the creative industries to meet and discuss these themes - the discussion will provide the basis for a performative manifesto and Q&A in the evening, in dialogue with the audience. Day two shifts to Laima's latest artistic output - alongside special guests including Joe Goddard, Al Doyle and Deewee, they'll use music, moving image and performance to explore the shift into a new world we all are adapting to, building on the history of the Southbank Centre in the recovery of post-war Britain, providing healing and community after collective trauma.

Southbank Centre regulars, the **London Contemporary Orchestra** bring three projects to *Purcell Sessions* with three new collaborators, **Sarah Davachi**, **Laurel Halo** and **Coby Sey**. The partnership with Sarah Davachi launches *Purcell Sessions* as the composer and ensemble combine to create a meditative performance of her new album, *Antiphonals* (16 Sept). In November, Berlin-based American experimental music composer-producer Laurel Halo blends masterful orchestration and new musical ideas (11 Nov). Finally, vocalist, musician and DJ Coby Sey creates a new sonic palette for his haunting sounds and introspective lyrics.

The **Philharmonia Orchestra** steps forward for two events in *Purcell Sessions* curated by visionary violinist **Pekka Kuusisto**. The first, 'Reef and Desert' (3 Oct) sees the orchestra traverse astonishing terrains in works from Gabriella Smith and John Luther Adams and the second, 'Glass, Metal, Wood and Water' (28 Nov) combines new music inspired by nature with works by Andrea Tarrodi, Riikka Talvitie, Outi Tarkiainen, Erkki-Sven Tuur and Anna Thorvaldsdottir. Both shows are part of the Philharmonia's 'Music of Today' series.

Newly-announced artistic partners, **Manchester Collective** present two projects – their first major touring project of the year, 'Voice of the Whale' (2 Oct) and 'Heavy Metal' (3 Dec), a night of big percussion, live electronics and amplified strings, with contemporary composers, including Ben Nobuto, Bryce Dessner, Dobrinka Tabakova and Sebastian Gainsborough (Vessel).

Purcell Sessions features the world exclusive performance of *Heaven* by **Mieko Kawakami**, with staging by Jack McNamara, Artistic Director of Live Theatre Newcastle; this unique onstage reading between two actors and a musician transports the audience to Japan and delves into the pleasures and perils of adolescent friendship (23 Oct).

K-Music Festival presents three projects as part of *Purcell Sessions*. **Kyungso Park** - known for her ground-breaking collaborations returns to the festival - this time with Welsh fiddler Angharad Jenkins, and Gayageum player Soona Park Kyungso Park for a project crossing the borders between Korean traditional and contemporary music (17 Oct). For the first time, K-Music has partnered with Yeowoorak Festival, the National Theatre of Korea, to present the live performance of Seoul-based musical duo **Dal:um** challenging the sonic possibilities of Korea's most well-known traditional string instruments (6 Nov). Finally, **Soojin Suh's Coloris Trio** invites saxophonist Camilla George for a trailblazing collaboration (17 Nov); Soojin Suh is one of Korea's foremost experimental drummers.

Album launches and new material

Visionary London producer, multi-instrumentalist and tech-embracing performer **Bishi** presents her third studio album *Let My Country Awake* live in the Purcell Room (13 Oct). Inspired by the essay collection 'The Good Immigrant' and Rabindranath Tagore's Nobel-winning poem exploring borderless identity, the new album features revolutionary use of her trademark electric sitar and four-octave vocal range. Released on her own label Gryphon, the album is a call to find empathy in a divided world and features sampled interviews from Nikesh Shukla, Salena Godden and Darren Chetty. Bishi's live performances make heavy use of new technologies, including interactive bodysuits and live-coded audiovisual environments.

Berlin-based multidisciplinary artist **Lyra Pramuk** presents *Delta*, the follow-up compilation to her debut album *Fountain*, where she'll rework the source material in a live performance at the Purcell Room (31 Oct). *Fountain* was composed and arranged entirely using the sounds of her own voice - futuristic folk music at its best, where body and spirit enter trance states and sound becomes an extension of desire. In *Delta*, she projects this through the many lenses of her colleagues and collaborators.

Curator, composer and conductor **Robert Ames** presents his latest album, *Change Ringing* (4 & 5 Nov). This new album unites Western tradition with 20th-century electronic techniques to transport us to a peaceful, colourful state of mind. Ames has been a key exchange agent between the classical tradition and contemporary music, working closely with many of the leading figures in new music, including Philip Glass, Meredith Monk and Bryce Dessner. Recent collaborations include fashion powerhouses Vivienne Westwood, Nike and Alexander McQueen; and musicians including Actress, Frank Ocean and Jonsi.

Venetian ambient musician **Gigi Masin** presents his new album *Calypso* (26 & 27 Nov), inspired by the mythical Greek island of Ogygia and its alleged real-life counterpart Gavdos. The album - like the island itself - intrigues, hinting at the dark and dangerous, made mellow with centuries of age, but still present beneath the surface.

South-London born songwriter and producer **Jamie Isaac** brings his mellow brand of piano-laden beats

and buttery-smooth vocals to 'Purcell Sessions' (9 & 10 Dec). Alongside special guests, this much-anticipated show signals a follow up to Isaac's 2019 album (04:30) *Idler* which came on the back of *Couch Baby* and two EPs: *I Will Be Cold Soon* and *Blue Break*. His previous collaborators have included Denzel Curry, King Krule, Wiki, Rejjie Snow and MC Pinty. Although classically trained, Isaac now makes music traversing jazz, R&B, soul, hip-hop and electronics using a palette of hazy beats, jazzy piano and nocturnal soul.

The **London Sinfonietta's** 'Writing the Future' project (6 Feb) features creators from all cultural and musical backgrounds. Sound artist **Alicia Jane Turner** creates projects that are raw, provocative and political through a feminist, queer lens - 'Tell Me When you Get Home' is a theatrical and sensory piece for solo soprano and ensemble that explores gendered experiences of walking alone at night. Composer **Luke Lewis** creates a dialogue between the historic recordings of songs and tales of coal miners, made by the American ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax, and the virtuoso playing of the London Sinfonietta musicians.

Four lush voices expand on their harmony-laden vocals with an orchestral quartet in '**WOOM: Into the Rest**' (10 March). The London-based, four-piece concept-choir known for their reworkings of songs by Frank Ocean and OutKast showcase their upcoming EP, playing with an orchestral quartet for the first time.

Elsewhere - signature literature events

Out-Spoken, London's premier evening of poetry and live music and a much-loved mainstay of the Purcell Room, is dedicated to showcasing emerging writers and musicians alongside more established names, blurring the lines between genres and making space for multidisciplinary artists. September's *Purcell Session's* event features sets by poets **Safiya Kamaria Kinshasa**, **Rebecca Perry** and **Jack Underwood**, plus music from **Mychelle**, and the **S.O.L. Collective** (30 Sep). November's line-up includes poetry from **alice hiller** and **Wayne Holloway-Smith**, plus music from **Simeon Hammond Dallas** (25 Nov).

Unique writer **Ruth Ozeki** will launch her new novel *The Book of Form and Emptiness* on stage alongside jazz saxophonist Alam Nathoo (7 Oct). Ruth is a novelist, film-maker and Zen Buddhist priest known for the blends of subject matter in her books, from climate change and religion to global pop culture, and her hybrid narrative forms. *The Book of Form and Emptiness* explores jazz, voices, poetry and philosophy.

Later that month, **Jade LB** gives a live reading of her coming of age book *Keisha the Sket* that went viral online in 2005, ahead of its much-anticipated print publication; Jade LB is joined by book contributors Candice Carty-Williams and Aniefiok Ekpoudom who reveal where they were when the writer first broke the internet and share their thoughts on why the noughties, viral story became such a memorable cultural moment for a generation of young Brits (29 Oct).

- ENDS -

For further press information please contact:
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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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