

## Press Release

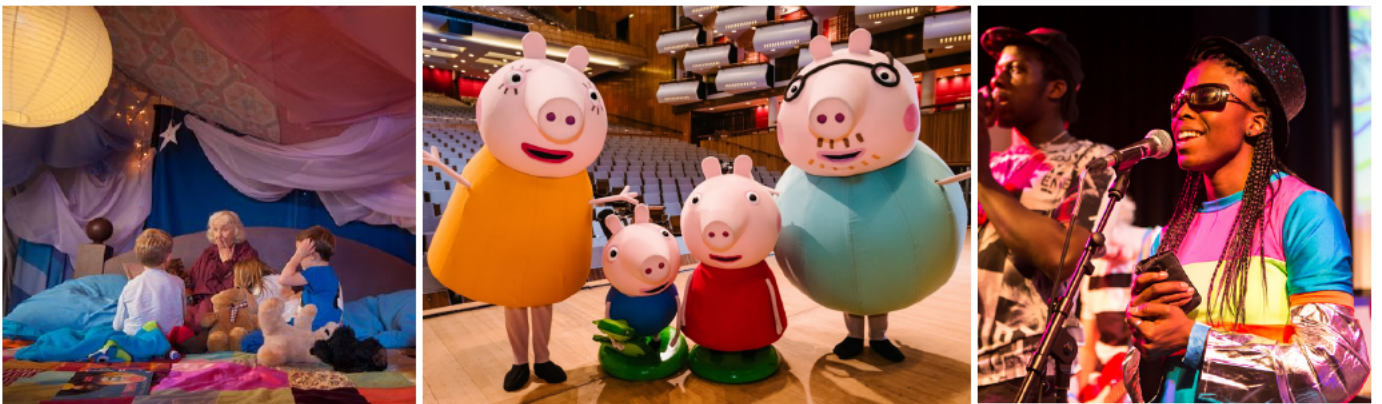
**Date:** Thursday 6 December 2018

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

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

### Southbank Centre announces full line-up for the eighteenth *Imagine Children's Festival*, coming February Half Term 2019



Story Museum Oxford's *Time For Bed* © Andrew Walmsey; *Peppa Pig* in the Royal Festival Hall © Dan Tsantilis; *Heart n Soul Do Your Own Thing* © Tim Mitchell.

Southbank Centre's *Imagine Children's Festival* turns eighteen in 2019 - but it's nowhere near growing up! The annual festival returns 13-24 February 2019 for a half-term week of the best in children's theatre, comedy, family parties, hands-on activities, DJs, dance, immersive experiences and full-on fun for children and their grownups. With more than 180 events jam-packed into twelve days and **fifty percent of the festival completely free**, *Imagine* is the biggest festival of its kind in London. It is dedicated to families experiencing and enjoying all kinds of art and culture together.

The multi-arts line-up for 2019 includes former Children's Laureates and creators of some of the best-loved characters in UK children's literature, **Jacqueline Wilson**, **Malorie Blackman** and **Chris Riddell**, coming together on the Royal Festival Hall stage to celebrate 20 years of the Waterstones Children's Laureate; a London-wide storytelling game of 'consequences' involving more than **600 school children** with poet **Joseph Coelho**; an interactive sensory **SoundPit** installation using music and motion-capture technology to explore the phenomenon of synaesthesia; **Sue Perkins** conducting the Orion Orchestra's *Noisy Notes*; **David McKee**, author and illustrator of *Elmer the Elephant*, in an exclusive event celebrating the 30th birthday of his popular patchwork friend; and **Peppa Pig's** first concert with a full-size orchestra conducted - for the first time ever - by Mummy Pig.

The **Kids Takeover** returns for another year, giving a group of children the chance to take the reins of the festival alongside the Southbank Centre team in all areas of the festival production, from contributing to the line-up to selling programmes, making tannoy announcements and ensuring shows start on time.

**Tamsin Ace, Festival Programmer, Southbank Centre**, said:

“*Imagine* festival is for kids, by kids. This year we are bursting at the seams with activities and events to inspire, engage and entertain. With the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room reopening in April 2018, after two years’ refurbishment, we’re back to full capacity across our 17-acre site - which just means more fun for everyone! I’m particularly proud of the increase in BSL interpreted, Relaxed and accessible events. We’ll also be live-streaming the League of Laureates and Elmer’s 30th Birthday events to Seven Stories, The National Centre for Children’s Books, in Newcastle, beaming top quality content to the other end of the country. All of this means that even more families will discover something incredible together at Southbank Centre’s *Imagine*.”

**Jill Coleman, Director of Children’s Books at BookTrust**, the UK’s largest children’s reading charity, said:

“As we look forward to celebrating 20 years of the Waterstones Children’s Laureate, we are delighted to announce the launch of the nationwide League of Laureates tour at *Imagine Children’s Festival 2019*. The Laureateship has played such a unique and vital role in showcasing the exceptional quality of children’s literature in the UK over the past 20 years, and we are thrilled that three of the extraordinary authors and illustrators to have worn the silver medal – Jacqueline, Malorie and Chris – will be launching the celebrations at Southbank Centre in February.”

This year a giant game of ‘consequences’ has been taking place across the city led by celebrated children’s author **Joseph Coelho**. **The Imagine Schools Writing Project** involves more than 36 London primary schools, and 600 students aged 7-11. Since November, children across the city have been working together to write separate sections of one story, inspired by Joseph’s work and supported by a teaching framework. These story segments will be combined together to make one complete and truly imaginative super-story which will be performed by Joseph at *Imagine* for the student authors, their teachers and families. The project aims to inspire and support children as creative writers and motivate them to continue to develop their writing and reading back in school and beyond, as well as support teachers to guide creative writing in the classroom.

**Free** events include this year’s **Book in a Day**, the best selling novel, award-winning franchise and big-screen adaptation by **Cressida Cowell**, ***How To Train Your Dragon***. The whole book will be read over the course of the day, with special guests and live performances to be announced, and a free book signing from Cressida Cowell herself (23 Feb, Clore Ballroom, RFH). Plus events and activities popping up all across the Southbank Centre site every day during the festival, including The Story Museum Oxford’s **Time for Bed** - an enormous storytelling bed complete with patchwork quilt families can cuddle up on together, **Morning Music Time** and **Bedtime Stories** to ease children in and out of the day, a **giant chalkboard** and a **huge playground** designed by Anna Bruder on the Riverside Terrace, and **The Rig**: a musical playground for all the family built from recycled objects (13-24 Feb, various venues, Southbank Centre).

Full festival listings including BSL and Relaxed Performance information available [here](#).

**Further highlights of the festival, per artform include:**

**Literature and storytelling:**

- From *Elmer the Patchwork Elephant*, to *Mr Benn* and *Not Now Bernard*, **David McKee** is one of the most recognisable and beloved children’s book creators in the world. In this special, exclusive event to celebrate the 30th Birthday Year of Elmer, David goes through his career as an illustrator

and into animation and design offering a unique insight into the creative process of one of our most prolific and enduring children's book makers (18 Feb, QEH)

- Current Waterstones Children's Laureate **Lauren Child**, multi-award-winning, bestselling writer and artist and the mind behind beloved children's book characters Clarice Bean, Ruby Redfort and Charlie and Lola joins the *Imagine* line-up. In conversation with Alexandra Derbyshire, Executive Producer on the *Paddington* films, she'll talk about her time as Laureate, as well as her best-loved characters and inspirations (21 Feb, PUR)
- Children can hear the enchanting tales of *Yokki and the Parno Gry* and *Polonius the Pit Pony* from acclaimed Romani storyteller **Richard O'Neill**. Born and brought up in a large, traditional nomadic Romani Gypsy family, O'Neill tells captivating stories that reflect the oral storytelling tradition of his background (21 Feb, Level 5 Function Room, RFH)
- **Living Paintings** are the only charity in the UK who design, create and publish tactile and audio books for blind and partially sighted people. This session is designed specifically for children aged 5-8 with visual impairments to introduce 'Touch to See' books, re-telling some of the best loved children's books in braille or tactile painted pictures, to inspire a love of stories in all (18 Feb, Foyle Pavilion, RFH)
- Through her beautifully illustrated storybooks, award-winning Syrian author and illustrator **Nadine Kaadan** helps children understand war. She brings an interactive storytelling and art workshop to *Imagine* to introduce her story *Tomorrow*. *Tomorrow* focuses on about the strength of family love, the rich culture and proud history of Damascus, and a courageous little boy growing up in a time of conflict (16 Feb, Foyle Pavilion, RFH)
- Two events help young people see the power of their own self-belief: illustrator **Andrea Pippins** is joined by special guests to present her new book, *Step Into Your Power*, showing children aged 8-12 how to make their dreams a reality, by harnessing their power and using it (17 Feb, PUR); and Paralympian and TV presenter **Ade Adepitan** shares *Ade's Amazing Ade-ventures: Battle of the Cyborg Cat*: a tale of a young boy from Nigeria learning to adjust to living in East London, conquering his doubts through friendship and self-belief (23 Feb, Level 5 Function Room, RFH)
- Families can learn about nature, nurture and what each one of us can do to protect our planet in two engaging events: **Chitra Soundar** (author of the popularly acclaimed *You're Safe With Me*) shares her beautifully illustrated new story *You're Snug With Me*, set in the endangered home of a mother polar bear and her two newborn cubs (24 Feb, Level 5 Function Room, RFH); and authors of the best-selling *Great Big Green Book*, **Mary Hoffman and Ros Asquith** share ideas and family-friendly ways to keep the planet green (23 Feb, Level 5 Function Room, RFH)
- The National Poetry Library, the largest public collection of modern poetry in the world situated within the Royal Festival Hall building, hosts a line-up of engaging events and activities to get kids of all ages into poetry, including: a special '**Rug Rhymes**' session of nursery rhymes and poems for under-5s and their carers inspired by the ever-popular *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen; **Picture a Poem Illustration Workshop** with children's illustrator and poet **Ed Boxall**; and **Powerfully Persuasive Poems** with hip-hop poet and MC **Simon Mole**, and Centre for Literacy in Primary Poetry Award (CLIPPA) winning poets **Karl Nova** and **Rachel Rooney** (18 Feb, National Poetry Library)

**Theatre, performance and comedy:**

- An interactive screening of ***We're Going on a Bear Hunt***, based on the bestselling bedtime book by **Michael Rosen** (poet, presenter and author of over 140 books) illustrated by the award-winning **Helen Oxenbury**, with a live orchestral soundtrack from the City of London Sinfonia and a fun sing-along (18 Feb, RFH)
- Non-stop action-packed theatrical pirate adventure, ***Captain Flinn and the Pirate Dinosaurs 2: The Magic Cutlass***, with live music, puppetry and dastardly dinosaurs from award-winning children's theatre company **Les Petits**, based on the book by Giles Andreae and Russell Ayto (19-23 Feb, QEH)
- ***The Singing Mermaid***, a magical musical based on the book written by Julia Donaldson MBE (*The Gruffalo*) and illustrated by best-selling Lydia Monks (*What the Ladybird Heard*), with puppetry from acclaimed **Little Angel Theatre** (16-20 Feb, PUR)
- ***The Day I Fell Into A Book***, using binaural sound recordings, intricate lighting technology and projection to create a three-dimensional sound and theatre experience for everyone who loves myths, legends and reading. Produced by Fuel Theatre (19-23 Feb, Blue Room, RFH)
- ***I Wish I Was a Mountain***, written and performed by former Glastonbury Poetry Slam Champion **Toby Thompson**, using rhyme, live music and a smattering of metaphysical philosophy to boldly reimagine Herman Hesse's *Faldum* for ages 6+, with BSL interpretation of every show (22-23 Feb, PUR)
- Children's comedian **Jeremy Strong**, author of wacky books including *My Brother's Famous Bottom* and *The Hundred-Mile-an-Hour Dog* series, brings his hilarious stand-up for ages 7+ to the Purcell Room (19 Feb, PUR)
- Created especially for parents with newborns ***Screaming With Laughter*** is a top-class afternoon comedy club created and hosted by **Hatty Ashdown**, co-writer of the Comedy Central sitcom *Give Out Girls* and starring **Jessica Fosterkew** co-host of *The Guilty Feminist* podcast and regular host of *The Comedy Club* on BBC R4 Extra. It promises adult stand-up where the acts won't make fun of the audience for moving around, feeding and changing, or if their babies are having a screaming match (14 Feb, Level 5 Function Room, RFH)

#### Classical and contemporary music:

- Author, comedian and connoisseur of amateur bakes, **Sue Perkins** joins the **Orion Orchestra** as guest conductor of *Noisy Notes*, an interactive concert bringing old favourites and familiar tunes to life with a full symphony orchestra experience for all ages (24 Feb, QEH)
- World-record-breaking beatboxer, composer, music producer and World Loopstation Champion, **Shlomo** makes all kinds of music using just his mouth and a mic. He returns to Southbank Centre for *Imagine* festival with his sell-out show, *Shlomo's Beatbox Adventure for Kids* where everyone young and old can become one of his sonic superhero sidekicks in a world of funny sounds, brilliant noises and cool music (21 Feb, PUR)
- Peppa Pig, along with Mummy Pig, Daddy Pig and George, come to the Queen Elizabeth Hall for **Peppa Pig: My First Concert**, a fun, interactive introduction to a live orchestra for ages 18 months and older. Peppa and George learn all about the different sounds that instruments make together, and enjoy some of their favourite music from the show played by an orchestra as well

as discovering some other exciting orchestral pieces, perfect for children. Little piggies can join in with Peppa and her family, and make music of their own! (15-17 Feb, QEH)

- Young ones can enjoy the best introduction to classical music available, with **OAE Tots**, presented by Southbank Centre resident **Orchestra for the Age of Enlightenment**. This 45-minute concert of Handel's *Water Music*, which was written for a festival on the Thames includes lots of action and activity introducing children aged 2 to 5 to the magic of classical music, including a chance to meet the players and their instruments after the performance (24 Feb, PUR)
- **Chineke! Juniors** present a whole day of music making totally **free**, where budding musicians can explore what it is like to create music in an ensemble, and reinterpret the sounds of the orchestra through dance, art and storytelling. Chineke! Juniors is a youth orchestra of black and minority ethnic musicians aged 11-18, and the sister ensemble to the professional Chineke! Orchestra, the first black and minority ethnic orchestra in Europe (17 Feb, Clore Ballroom, RFH)
- Children's songwriter **Al Start** presents an hour of original songs about cakes, castles, gloop and slime, bears in wardrobes and aliens on roofs, featuring sing-along favourites for primary school age children and their families (15 Feb, Clore Ballroom, RFH)
- Award-winning picture book author **Ken Wilson-Max** delivers his all-singing, all-dancing ***This Is The Drum***, where kids and grown-ups can discover different drums from around the world, learn how to play a simple rhythm and create a drum to take home (20 Feb, Foyle Pavilion, RFH)
- After its sell-out success over a decade ago, Oily Cart's **Hippity Hop** is back to meet a new generation of hip young things. The first ever interactive hip hop show for young children aged 2-5, it uses graffiti-based designs, hip-hop beats and the twinkling lights of the city to create a multi-sensory hip-hopera! There will be a Relaxed Performance on Friday 15 February at 2.30pm (13-17 Feb, Spirit Level, RFH)

#### Free events:

- **Heart n Soul** is an award-winning creative arts company who believe in the talents and power of people with learning disabilities, and who provide opportunities for people to discover, develop and share this talent - with lots of fun. In a free, day-long takeover, ***Do Your Own Thing with Heart n Soul***, young participant Reuben curates a day of DJs, live music and radio for everyone to enjoy. This will be BSL interpreted (20 Feb, Clore Ballroom, RFH)
- Budding B-girls and B-boys can throw some shapes in **Big Moves for Little Groovers**, a hip-hop dance workshop for children ages 5+ (with big kids encouraged to join in too), and then freestyle at **FUNDMC** a block party of the highest quality child-friendly hip-hop, funk and disco anthems, hosted by The Doctor's Orders, promoters of some of the world's best DJs and MCs (16 Feb, Clore Ballroom RFH)
- Families can feel the thrill of the limelight and learn their favourite dance styles featured on *Strictly Come Dancing* in **Strictly Kids**, with demos from leading child ballroom dancers (21 Feb, Clore Ballroom, RFH), and celebrate all things musical theatre at **Monday at the Musicals**, with workshops and performances from real West End performers, and world-class musical theatre, song and dance troupe, **West End Kids** (18 Feb, Clore Ballroom, RFH)
- **Timberlina**, the world's premier ecologically-minded bearded drag queen, takes families on a historical exploration of Molly Spoons, one of the earliest incarnations of what might be referred

to now as a drag queen or alter-ego from Victorian London (22 Feb Clore Ballroom, RFH), whilst dead-pan comedy performance troupe **Figs in Wigs** are joined by their cabaret friends **Steve Nice**, and **ShayShay**, one of the best known figures on London's alternative drag scene, for a whole day on Planet Fig, encountering strange aliens, exploring how earthlings live and dancing with mysterious ocean creatures. Presented in association with The Raze Collective, who support and develop LGBTQI performance (19 Feb, Clore Ballroom, RFH)

Full festival listings including BSL and Relaxed Performance information available [here](#).

Tickets to all shows go on sale to Southbank Centre Members on 11 December and to the general public on 12 December <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/festivals-series/imagine-childrens-festival> / 0203 879 9555

# ENDS #

Images available to download [here](#).

**Join the conversation** @southbankcentre #ImagineFest

**For further information, press accreditation and to discuss interviews and feature opportunities please contact:** Phoebe Gardiner [phoebe.gardiner@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:phoebe.gardiner@southbankcentre.co.uk) / 020 7921 0967

#### **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](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk).