

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Press Release

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Images: [HERE](#)

Shirley Ballas and Strictly stars support the Southbank Centre's first virtual social dance to combat loneliness this winter



Credit line: Belinda Lawley

On Friday 18 December, the Southbank Centre will, for the first time ever, stream an evening of dance and jazz live from the iconic Royal Festival Hall to help combat loneliness this winter.

Announced today, some of the BBC Strictly Come Dancing judges and professional dancers will make special cameo appearances with messages of support during the event.

The free, 'Winter Tea Dance' invites the country's dance-lovers to take part in a communal experience from the comfort of their own homes. Hosted by one of the venue's most popular ballroom DJs and London's leading dance promoter, Mr Wonderful alongside former Senior British Ballroom Champion Janet Cunningham-Clayton, audiences will be taken through an evening of Foxtrot, Waltz and Tango, alongside festive jazz numbers performed by awarding-winning ensemble and talent development organisation, *Tomorrow's Warriors*.

Through the Southbank Centre's partnership with the National Activity Providers' Association, the event will reach over 3,000 partner care homes across the UK and thousands of socially-isolated people nationwide. Other key partners include Kings' College Hospital.

The event follows the Southbank Centre's long-standing tradition of hosting social dances in the Royal Festival Hall Clore Ballroom. The venue will be welcoming back its regular attendees, alongside many of the 4,500 participants from its hugely successful *Art by Post* scheme - the national arts and

wellbeing project created in response to the COVID-19 emergency. Art by Post participants have exclusive access to our Front Row tickets, engaging in the event through Zoom, with the option to interact with Mr Wonderful and show off their dancing from their living room.

The Southbank Centre is home to the National Academy of Social Prescribing. The arts organisations' social dances are a staple of our extensive Creative Learning and Arts & Wellbeing programme. As the format goes online for the first time, the Southbank Centre will demonstrate its commitment to finding innovative ways of increasing access to enriching social encounters for those in social care and community settings.

Shirley Ballas, Head Judge, Strictly Come Dancing, said: *"The Southbank Centre's virtual social dance is a brilliant way to get dancing at a time when we are unable to physically access our local arts centres and dance classes. It's so important to keep active and keep our spirits up and I hope people of all ages across the UK join in from their living rooms and kitchens, as well as everyone in care homes across the country. I am thrilled to be making a guest appearance!"*

Alexandra Brierley, Director of Creative Learning at the Southbank Centre, said: *"We are thrilled to be bringing back our much-loved social dance programme this winter. It's one of the most joyous initiatives we run here at the Southbank Centre and it's been such a shame that we've had to go without them during our closure. While we might not be able to meet together in person this time, we hope that we can bring the joy of dance and music to so many people through our partnerships with care providers nationwide."*

Alison Teader, Programme Director, National Activity Providers' Association (NAPA) Arts in Care Homes, said: *"NAPA is delighted to be partnering with the Southbank Centre for the Winter Tea Dance. Our care home members and relatives will love having the chance to try out some new dance moves and maybe requesting a tune from Mr Wonderful! It has undoubtedly been a very difficult year for residents and staff and it is lovely for care homes to have this festive event to prepare for and look forward to. The arts are so important and having the chance to sing and dance in the company of the Strictly stars is an amazing gift. We are excited to be working with the Southbank Centre on more creative initiatives for care settings in 2021."*

ENDS

Join the conversation:

#WinterTeaDance

@southbankcentre

@NAPAlivinglife

NOTES TO EDITORS

Listings information

Free Winter Tea Dance Broadcast Online

Friday 18 December, 7 - 8.30pm

Suitable for all ages, and all levels of dance experience. Beginners are welcome.

Join us live on YouTube via [southbankcentre.co.uk/teadance](https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/teadance)

The Winter Tea Dance reaching care homes

The Southbank Centre has collaborated with Clare Carswell to create an activity pack to support activity organisers in care homes to prepare for the event. You can download the free resource pack [here](#). Care homes looking to get further involved are asked to contact socialteadances@southbankcentre.co.uk

About the Southbank Centre

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre and one of the UK's top five visitor attractions, 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).

About social dance at the Southbank Centre

Ballroom, Foxtrot, Cha-cha... since 1951, social dances have drawn light-footed visitors to our venues to try a huge variety of moves. Today, our tea dance is one of the only free events of its kind in London, and welcomes around 300 visitors every month. More than three quarters of social dance attendees at Southbank Centre are aged over 55, and more than half are aged over 65. In a survey last year, 82% said that attending reduced feelings of isolation.

About NAPA

NAPA is a membership organisation and charity, and is a leader in the field of promoting the importance of meaningful activities in care homes and the need for training and support for care staff.
www.napa-activities.co.uk

About Art By Post

Art by Post sends free creative activity booklets through the post and via email to people who are isolated and living with chronic mental and physical health conditions, across the UK. The visual arts, craft and poetry activities are designed by artists and aim to inspire participants to be creative and boost their wellbeing. Friends, neighbours, carers and family members are encouraged to take part alongside the participants, and freepost envelopes are provided so that they can share their artwork with us. We hope this builds a sense of connection with us at the Southbank Centre as well as with others who are taking part, and we aim to create an exhibition of Art by Post artworks when we reopen.

Art by Post is delivered in partnership with the National Academy of Social Prescribing, Age UK Camden, Age UK Oxfordshire, Nightingale Hammerson, HOME, artsdepot, Philharmonia Orchestra, The Barn (Aberdeenshire), Beacon Arts, Sunderland Culture, Platform (Glasgow), National Activity Providers Association, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Cardiff Community Housing Association, and King's College Hospital NHS Trust.

Healthcare workers and other professionals are encouraged to refer people onto the scheme, and organisations can request the booklets in bulk to distribute to their communities. Our national partner organisations are also helping us reach people from Aberdeen to Oxford, and we now have over 4,000 people taking part from a range of institutional settings, including residential and nursing homes, hospices, hospitals, mental health services and prison services, as well as many who are taking part from their homes.

About Tomorrow's Warriors

The Cube is a dedicated space where Tomorrow's Warriors hosts its acclaimed Learning Programme at Southbank Centre, the organisation is proud to be a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England and a PRS Foundation Talent Development Partner.
www.tomorrowwarriors.org