

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

MELTDOWN

Press Release

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Contact: Phoebe Gardiner, phoebe.gardiner@southbankcentre.co.uk / 020 7921 0967

Alexandra Shaw alexandra.shaw@southbankcentre.co.uk / 020 7921 0676

Southbank Centre announces Nile Rodgers as curator of *Meltdown* 2019



Nile Rodgers © Britt Loyd

Southbank Centre today reveals that the curator of *Meltdown* festival 2019 will be three-time Grammy Award-winning American composer, producer, arranger, guitarist, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, Chairman of the Songwriters Hall of Fame and Abbey Road Studios' first ever Chief Creative Advisor, **Nile Rodgers**.

From **3 - 11 August**, Rodgers will take over Southbank Centre with his unique creative vision. Over nine days and across the world-class stages of the Royal Festival Hall, newly reopened brutalist masterpieces the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room, and the remainder of Southbank Centre's 17-acre cultural quarter on the banks of the River Thames, Rodgers will present a hand-picked line-up of show-stopping music, art and free events, in what will undoubtedly be the funkier festival of the year.

Among music legends, Nile Rodgers is truly exceptional. From co-founding slick disco pioneers CHIC with his late creative partner Bernard Edwards, to his own global success as a songwriter and producer, Rodgers has contributed to records that have cumulatively sold more than 500 million albums and 75 million singles worldwide, and has left an indelible signature on the music of today.

More than a collaborator, Rodgers has been instrumental in the careers of some of the biggest artists in the history of popular music. Following the incredible success of the songs he and Bernard Edwards co-wrote and produced for Sister Sledge ('He's The Greatest Dancer' and 'We Are Family' to name but two) and Diana Ross ('Upside Down' and 'I'm Coming Out' - the biggest sellers of her career) his production on David Bowie's 1983 album *Let's Dance* was a worldwide sensation. The title track became one of the best-selling UK singles of all time, galvanizing both his and Bowie's positions in mainstream culture and remaining the greatest success of one of music's greatest artist's careers. Rodgers' remix of Duran Duran's 'The Reflex' became the band's biggest-selling single and an archetype song of its time leading to an over 35 year relationship with the band; and when he produced Madonna's second album, *Like A Virgin* (1984) securing her first number one album and single, and the career-defining 'Material Girl', Rodgers undeniably hastened her rapid ascent to pop royalty selling over 25 million albums. CHIC's 1979 number one hit 'Good Times' is one of the most sampled songs in history. It was most famously used in The Sugarhill Gang's 'Rapper's Delight', widely credited as the first record to break hip hop into the mainstream and setting off a paradigm in which Rodgers' music has been used as the foundation of several new number 1 songs including Will Smith's 'Gettin' Jiggy With It' and Modjo's 'Lady (Hear Me Tonight)'.

Rodgers has continued to set sonic trends in recent years through his work with chart-topping artists such as Avicii, Sam Smith and Disclosure. In 2014, Rodgers was again responsible for a watershed moment in electronic dance music with the single 'Get Lucky' from iconic French electronic duo Daft Punk's fourth studio album, *Random Access Memories*, which won three Grammy Awards including Album of the Year. Also featuring Pharrell Williams as co-writer, 'Get Lucky' was a global critical and commercial success, topping the charts in over thirty countries and becoming one of the best-selling singles of all time, further evidencing the timelessness of the Nile Rodgers sound. 'Get Lucky' was followed with singles 'Lose Yourself To Dance' and 'Give Life Back To Music'.

In the 40 plus years since he and his prized '59 Fender Stratocaster (aka "The Hitmaker") first started filling dance floors across the world, Nile Rodgers has founded the **We Are Family Foundation**, which powers youth around the world who are changing the game with their ideas, innovations and social good solutions, published his autobiography ***Le Freak: An Upside Down Story of Family, Disco and Destiny*** (2011), co-created soundtracks for movies such as *Coming To America* and the *Halo* computer game series, provided keynote addresses at countless global music industry conferences and festivals including 2017's SXSW, beaten cancer twice, been inducted into the Rock

And Roll Hall Of Fame and Songwriters Hall Of Fame and has only in the last few months become the Chairman of the latter.

Just last year he released a new album with CHIC, the Top 10 ranked *It's About Time* featuring NAO, Mura Masa, Anderson .Paak, Elton John, Emeli Sande and Lady Gaga amongst many others, and led an extensive sold out UK arena tour. He was also announced as Abbey Road Studios' first ever Chief Creative Advisor. The role sees Rodgers establish Abbey Road as his primary creative base and serve as the studios' global ambassador within the creative community. His dedication to nurturing new talent, as well as his enduring appeal with audiences of all ages, was evident when he appeared as a guest judge on ITV 1's *The X Factor* in autumn 2018. He and CHIC are currently joining forces with Cher on the America-wide *Here We Go Again* tour.

This summer Rodgers becomes the next in an extraordinary line-up of 25 world-changing artists selected to share their vision as curators of *Meltdown* - from the very first curator, British composer George Benjamin in 1993, though other luminaries including Laurie Anderson, John Peel, David Bowie, Lee 'Scratch' Perry, Morrissey, Patti Smith, Massive Attack, Yoko Ono, M.I.A and The Cure frontman Robert Smith in 2018.

The festival has an unparalleled reputation among artists and is famed for providing a stage for exclusive collaborations and intimate, once-in-a-lifetime musical experiences for diverse audiences. Past performers have included Nina Simone, The Yeah Yeah Yeahs, and Jeff Buckley who played his final UK show at Elvis Costello's *Meltdown*. The New York Dolls reunited for Morrissey's curation; Patti Smith performed *Horses* in full for her festival; and an all-star line-up including Nick Cave, Grace Jones and Pete Doherty sang Disney songs with Jarvis Cocker at his 2007 *Meltdown*.

Nile Rodgers said: *"To be able to curate and produce nine days of live music for the city of London, the UK and music enthusiasts visiting from all over the world is truly a dream come true. Anyone who knows my career knows that Funk, Disco, Jazz, Soul, Classical, POP, New Wave, R&B, Fusion, Punk Rock, Afrobeat, Electronic and Dance music all play a role and you can expect that to be reflected in the performances we are planning. It's all about the groove and this August everyone in London will be dancing to incredible live performances!"*

Bengi Ünsal, Senior Contemporary Music Programmer at Southbank Centre, said: *"I am thrilled and honoured to welcome Nile Rodgers to Southbank Centre this August for the 26th Meltdown festival. Meltdown is the longest-running artist curated festival in the world and for 25 years has been celebrating those at the frontiers of music. It's hard to overstate the impact that this year's curator has had both as part of CHIC and as a solo producer on what we call popular music today. He is constantly creating and collaborating, and I can't wait to see what he will create across our venues. One thing's for certain: this will be the funkier Meltdown yet."*

ENDS

Nile Rodgers' Meltdown: 3-11 August 2019
Southbank Centre, London, UK
First line-up details to be announced this spring.

For more information go to www.southbankcentre.co.uk/meltdown or ring 0203 879 9555.

Press images can be downloaded [here](#).

For more information about Nile Rodgers, please contact: Fran DeFeo - frandefeo@gmail.com

For further press information please contact:

Phoebe Gardiner phoebe.gardiner@southbankcentre.co.uk / 020 7921 0967

Alexandra Shaw alexandra.shaw@southbankcentre.co.uk / 020 7921 0676

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Nile Rodgers + CHIC

Among music legends, Nile Rodgers is truly exceptional. He amplifies his legacy as a multiple GRAMMY-winning composer, producer, arranger and guitarist by constantly traversing new musical terrain and successfully expanding the boundaries of popular music. As the co-founder of CHIC and the newly elected Chairman of the Songwriters Hall of Fame, Rodgers pioneered a musical language that generated chart-topping hits like “Le Freak,” (the biggest selling single in the history of Atlantic Records!) and sparked the advent of hip-hop with “Good Times”. Nile Rodgers transcends all styles of music across every generation with a body of work that’s garnered him inductions into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame (2017) and the Songwriters Hall of Fame (2016).

Most recently, he was appointed as the first ever Chief Creative Advisor for the legendary Abbey Road Studios to cap off a year that has included “festival best” performances at both Glastonbury and Coachella that resulted in the BBC nominating the band for the BBC Music Awards as “Best Live Performance Of 2017” and the LA Times stating “Nile Rodgers influence stretches all over Coachella, beaming the sound of a better future”.

His work in the CHIC Organization and his productions for artists like David Bowie, Diana Ross, and Madonna have sold over 500 million albums and 75 million singles worldwide while his innovative, trendsetting collaborations with Daft Punk, Avicii, Sigala, Disclosure, and Sam Smith reflect the vanguard of contemporary music. Nile Rodgers & CHIC recently released their first new studio album, “It’s About Time” in over 26 years to critical acclaim and a Top 10 position in the UK album charts.

Meltdown, 1993 – present

Southbank Centre’s annual *Meltdown* festival has been running since 1993 and is the longest-running artist-curated festival in the world. Each year Southbank Centre invites a different cultural figure to act as curator and select performers and events of their choosing. Previous curators include George Benjamin, Louis Andriessen, Elvis Costello, Magnus Lindberg, Laurie Anderson, John Peel, Nick Cave, Scott Walker, Robert Wyatt, David Bowie, Lee Scratch-Perry, Morrissey, Patti Smith, Jarvis Cocker, Massive Attack, Ornette Coleman, Richard Thomson, Ray Davies, Anohni, Yoko Ono, James Lavelle, David Byrne, Guy Garvey, M.I.A and Robert Smith. Previous performers include Philip Glass, Lou Reed, Ivor Cutler, Sonic Youth, Suicide, Nina Simone, Blur, Radiohead, David Gilmour, Coldplay, Mercury Rev, Television, The Dandy Warhols, The

Polyphonic Spree, The Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Nancy Sinatra, Bert Jansch, Jeff Beck, John Cale, Iggy & The Stooges, Motorhead, Massive Attack, Moby, Nine Inch Nails, The Libertines, The Cure and Femi Kuti. *Meltdown* has a reputation for staging one-off performances and collaborations by legendary artists. Patti Smith performed 'Horses' in full for her *Meltdown*; Ray Davies re-staged the TV pop show 'Ready Steady Go!'; Jeff Buckley played his final UK show at Elvis Costello's *Meltdown*; The New York Dolls reunited for Morrissey; Nick Cave, Grace Jones and Pete Doherty sang Disney songs with Jarvis Cocker; and a rare live performance from Cocteau Twins' Elizabeth Fraser was part of Anohni's *Meltdown*. *Meltdown* is overseen by Southbank Centre Senior Contemporary Music Programmer, Bengi Ünsal.

About Southbank Centre

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre and one of the UK's top five visitor attractions, occupying a 17 acre site 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. 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).